Labour Monthly

EDITED BY R. PALME DUTT

Sydney R. Elliott

THE PEACE ALLIANCE AND THE FUTURE

SPECIAL **People's Front** ISSUE

JUNE 1938 SIXPENCE

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CORDEX

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LABOUR MONTHLY

A Magazine of International Labour

VOLUME 20 JUNE, 1938 NUMBER 6

Editor: R. PALME DUTT

CONTENTS

	Page
Reporting Further Progress	330
Notes of the Month *LABOUR AND THE PEOPLE'S FRONT* *By* R. P. D.	331
Peace Alliance and the Future *By* SYDNEY R. ELLIOTT	347
The Trade Unions and Unity *By* JOHN MAHON	352
The Swastika over the Balkans *By* DOROS ALASTOS	357
Labour and Van Zeeland *By* A LEAGUE OBSERVER	365
India and World Peace *By* V. K. KRISHNA MENON	375
Mongolia and the Far East War *By* G. D. R. PHILLIPS	379
Peace and the Colonial Question	384
The Philosophy of a Natural Scientist: A Rejoinder *By* CLEMENS DUTT	390

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Reporting Further Progress

YOU CAN'T HELP smiling when the report is "Sold out." Now we have to say, "Sold right out!" It is just another proof that working-class literature is finding "prosperity round the corner" with the left-hand turning. It is the kind of prosperity which does Britain more good and which shows Britain as being on the forward move. We no longer whisper discreetly, "There's somebody reading a 'left' book or paper;" there are so many of them doing it to-day that it is no uncommon sight on tram, bus or train. And, of course, that is as it should be.

During the past year there have been crises severe enough to shake the foundations of capitalist states. The swiftly flowing course of history looks to be moving into a raging torrent. On these troubled and turbulent waters are carried the destinies of millions of Britishers and other peoples of the world. How has the LABOUR MONTHLY fared in this period?

In 1937 we printed six thousand more copies than in the previous year. The last two issues, April and May, were sold out and the May issue represented an increase on the month of April. That is one aspect of the matter.

It became customary for a very large deficit to be carried from year to year until twelve months ago we were able to announce a deficit of only £85. Now we are able to announce a deficit of only £40 as being carried from 1937 to 1938.

Did these things come automatically? No! The co-operation between ourselves and the readers of the LABOUR MONTHLY was the responsible factor. The steady maintenance of the Guarantee Fund contributions and a good response in other donations has helped us to achieve this position plus a big reduction in the weight of debt. Donations reached the total of £230 and Guarantee Fund contributions a total of £128. During the year we were able to widen publicity which, together with the direct help we received from readers in the raising of sales, guaranteed the printing of an additional six thousand copies. That is how we have to present this rosier picture of the position of the LABOUR MONTHLY.

But as optimistic as the picture may be, we cannot sit back with easy complacency as though the job were completed. The difference between the cost of publishing and the money we get from sales remains; therefore does the need for the Guarantee Fund remain. *We have yet to get that ten thousand a month circulation which we aimed at twelve months back.* And the ten thousand a month circulation is the only sure way to stability.

We know that you want to see the LABOUR MONTHLY *paying for itself.*

Help to push forward the New Development of the LABOUR MONTHLY by sending a contribution to the DEVELOPMENT FUND!

If your position allows, contribute a certain sum each month to the GUARANTEE FUND!

And then set to work to bring in those new readers to reach THE TEN THOUSAND CIRCULATION!

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NOTES OF THE MONTH

Labour and the People's Front—Rising Anti-Fascist Forces—Opposition to Chamberlain—German Social Democracy and British Labour—Dividing the Opposition—Reactionary Press Delight—Sincere Difficulties—Nemesis of Left Socialist Formulas—"Independence" and Independence—The Meaning of Class Independence—Lenin on the Labour Party—Dependence of Capitalism—Mexican Searchlight—The Mass Basis of Independence—Unity on a Programme—How Fascism Comes—Lessons of France and Spain—Socialism and the People's Front—Peace and Socialism—Bread and Peace—The Way to Socialism

THERE is no question that the People's Front is now the central issue of British politics. We have pleasure in printing this month the article of Sydney R. Elliott, the Editor of *Reynolds News*, on the United Peace Alliance, the plan for which he first put forward in March, and which was adopted by the Co-operative Party Conference, representing five million members, in April. On June 5 this decision comes before the Co-operative Union Congress for ratification. Whatever the final decision, which may be temporarily affected by the difficulties of the Labour Party Executive's continued opposition, it is already evident that this policy has the enthusiastic support of the mass of the membership, provided that unity can be achieved in its realisation. The Liberal Party Conference in May has approved a similar policy. The Labour Party Executive has now issued its third successive statement on the People's Front. Although this statement is still a rejection, it is no longer the old style of pontifical excommunication of all supporters or repetition of old decisions, but endeavours to reason the case, balance the pros and cons, and even envisage the possibility under certain conditions. This partial change of approach is a measure of the growth of support for the People's Front

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within the Labour Party and also within the Labour Party Executive. A minority of four on the Labour Party Executive including half the directly elected representatives of the local labour parties, now supports the People's Front. All this is evidence that the aim of the People's Front, the conception of working class unity and of a broad combination of popular forces under the leadership of a United Labour Movement, is making headway, despite the barriers of traditional opposition. The urgency of the situation is making increasingly clear that this is the only practical alternative to the continued domination of Chamberlain, with all the menace that this means for the world and for this country.

IT is no exaggeration to say that this question of the People's Front in Britain is now a primary question of world politics. As Dimitrov pointed out in his article on the eve of May Day, " the forces of struggle against war and fascism are growing throughout the world." Spanish Democracy, despite the refusal of assistance and despite the intensified Italian-German offensive consequent on the British-Italian Agreement, has wiped out the prophecies of its early defeat and consolidated its resistance. In Abyssinia the official statement of the Negus to the League was able to claim that " the Ethiopian civil and military administration is actively maintained in a large part of the territory " and that " the resistance of the population is more intensive, united and effective than at any time since the Italian Army extended its invasion in the autumn of 1936 "; and Halifax could not dare to face the proposal of an enquiry into this claim. The Chinese People's Army has won victories over Japan which are transforming the situation in the Far East. At Geneva Britain's criminal rôle as the agent of the fascist Powers on the League Council did not have the easy passage intended for its plans; the stubborn stand for peace by the Soviet Union, with the co-operation of Spain, China and New Zealand, threw Halifax on the defensive, and was accompanied by the passive abstention of many of the smaller States. In France and the United States the public demand increases for a stronger stand against Chamberlain, for co-operation for peace and for the raising of the embargo on arms to Spain.

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THIS advance of the world anti-fascist forces and weakening of the world credit of the Chamberlain Government (outside Germany and Italy) is closely associated with the watching by international opinion of the growth of opposition to Chamberlain inside Britain, and the rising hope that his internal position is no longer secure, that the British people is awakening in revolt against his policy, and that unity of the opposition forces may yet defeat him. Will the People's Front be realised or not in Britain? The world watches for the answer, not only in the democratic countries, but equally from the reverse angle in the fascist countries. Hitler and Mussolini watch each sign of advance or setback of the People's Front in Britain in drawing together their estimate of forces to judge how far they may go forward with their offensive. Significant of this was the character of Henlein's recent visit to London, which was directed, not simply to Government and City representatives, but especially to various opposition or semi-opposition leaders.

WHEN Hitler was placed in power in Germany in 1933, in the first weeks of his régime, when it was still insecure and could have been easily overthrown by working class unity, before his burning of the Reichstag and institution of full terror, the first question his agents asked of every working class fighter they arrested was whether they had any knowledge of any steps being taken to realise a united working class front, whether there was any prospect of the Communist Party's appeal to the Social Democratic Party for a united front being accepted. Correctly he knew that here was his main concern and danger-point. So long as he could be sure that the Social Democratic Executive's answer continued in practice: "Pass, Hitler; we are holding them divided; go forward"; he knew that he could act without hesitation and even arrest the leaders of Social Democracy who were covering him with praise and expressions of devotion in the common fight against Communism. To-day the same process is being attempted on a world scale. The success of Hitler's offensive depends on the States and peoples he attacks being kept divided. For this purpose Chamberlain is as essential to Hitler

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as Hitler is to Chamberlain. So long as, in the relations of States, Hitler can count on Chamberlain maintaining the watchword: "Pass Hitler; we are holding them divided; go forward," he can carry forward his offensive in Europe against democracy, the freedom of the peoples, and the working class. But supposing Chamberlain were to fall. Supposing the British people were to unite against Chamberlain and defeat him. Supposing international working class unity were to be realised. It is at this point that it becomes no less essential for Hitler that the Labour Party Executive and the British leadership of the Trade Union and Socialist Internationals shall declare in 1938, as German Social Democracy declared in 1933: "Pass, Hitler; we are holding them divided; go forward." And this is the real issue behind all the elaborate arguments of the Labour Manifesto on the People's Front, no less than behind the rôle of the British trade union representatives at Oslo to prevent international trade union unity.

THE central issue of the Labour Manifesto on the People's Front is the one issue which it does not face. This is that it is a Manifesto for the *division* of the forces opposed to Chamberlain. This is the one central fact which destroys all the high-sounding arguments about "independence" and "socialism," and turns their real practical significance into the opposite. At the same time as the Manifesto was published, the Aylesbury by-election was in full swing. By the division of the opposition forces a seat which could have been won from Chamberlain was being given to Chamberlain. In order to smash the People's Front, Transport House was ready to spend unlimited money, not in the hope of winning a seat from Chamberlain, but to give a seat to Chamberlain. The Government organ, the *Daily Telegraph*, had no illusions as to the value of this policy as a bull point for Chamberlain:

> As at Aylesbury, the result of West Derby may depend on whether the Liberals and Socialists fight with two candidates and thus split the opposition vote, or agree upon a united front.

This is the plain, obvious common-sense fact which all the high-sounding arguments of the Manifesto cannot answer and do not attempt to answer. It is often said that the British

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electoral system is different from the French, and therefore the policy of the People's Front cannot apply. The exact opposite is the case. The British electoral system is different from the French, and therefore the People's Front is more necessary, not less. In France it is possible to run any number of candidates in the first stage, and it is only necessary for agreement to be reached at the second ballot in order to prevent a minority victory of reaction. In Britain, unless agreement is reached at the outset between the anti-facsist democratic forces, a seat may be given to Chamberlain on a minority. This simple, elementary fact of a defective electoral system (whose reform the Labour Party has refused to support) is glaring to ordinary anti-Government voters in all the critical constituencies where it is decisive for the outcome; but the Labour Manifesto remains in the clouds and blissfully oblivious to it. For this reason its practical effect, despite all the professed aims of " independence " and " socialism," is to help Chamberlain.

THAT this is its real significance is pointedly shown by the delighted welcome given to the Manifesto from the most reactionary Government organs and near-fascist press. Typical is the pæan from Hitler's closest organ in England, the Astor-Hitler *Observer*. This organ of the friends of fascism and enemies of the British people praises the Labour document under the title " A Well-Reasoned Case " :

> Holding its ground firmly against the urgings of a formidable cohort of hot gospellers, the Labour Party repeats its refusal to let its identity be sunk in a " Popular Front." . . . . The Labour Executive's Manifesto of yesterday is one of the best-reasoned political papers we have had for a long time. (*Observer*, May 15, 1938.)

We hope that this unreserved eulogy from one of the most openly pro-fascist organs in England will help to open the eyes of Labour supporters who may have been misled by the arguments put forward into thinking that this opposition to the People's Front is a left-wing policy, and not an extremely reactionary right-wing policy, welcomed by Chamberlain and Fascism.

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IT would be a mistake to under-estimate the sincere difficulties and misgivings felt by many Labour supporters with regard to the proposal of a People's Front, which is still widely misunderstood as if it were a reversion to the old type of right-wing Liberal-Labour policy. The opposition to it does not only come from the familiar right-wing opponents of working class unity. It also comes from some sections of the left and of the centre, from old stalwarts of the movement who have grown up in the fight against Liberalism and for the separation of Labour from all other parties, and who fear that all their work is to be undone; from serious Labour supporters who fear that the proposal means surrender or postponement of socialism and alliance with capitalism. The vote at the Labour Women's Conference is a warning-signal of the strength of these instinctive feelings, which are consciously played on by the right-wing leadership.

TAKING their cue from these conceptions, the right-wing leadership, the real allies of capitalism, the Citrines, Daltons and Clynes, endeavour to present themselves as ardent purists for working class " independence " and militant " socialism," for an immediate fight for complete socialism, for " nothing but socialism " as the only cure for all evils, while the real fighters on the left, a Cripps, a Pritt, a Pollitt or a Gallacher are presented as subtle decoys of capitalism seeking to corrupt the unbending Labour Movement. The character of this alignment should help to awaken serious left socialists and Labour supporters to a suspicion that there must be something wrong with the picture presented, and that the true facts, if the issues are frankly and carefully faced, are likely to be the opposite.

IN reality, these difficulties are a nemesis of the old empty, abstract character of the whole basis of the Labour Party's " independence " and " socialism "; of the substitution of a formal separation of labels from Liberalism and Conservatism in place of real independence from capitalism; of the conception of " socialism " as a millenary ideal to be attained by a legislative programme in place of the outcome of a profound process of social struggle; of the complete denial of the

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realities of class struggle. Those who are tied and fettered by these conceptions are clinging to the lifeless formulas of a past period, without realising how the frontiers of the struggle have developed in living practice. They do not see that the main enemy is no longer the old powerful Liberal Party as the ruling party of capitalism, manœuvring to carry the young struggling Labour Party in its wake; the main enemy is now the "National" Government as the concentration of the ruling class forces, and if the Labour Party, now the principal opposition party, can draw to itself the remnants of independent Liberalism and other opposition elements, it is so much the stronger to fight and defeat the main enemy. They do not see that the electoral question in the present stage is no longer a question of propaganda fights in order to help to place a newly born Labour Party on the map, with complete indifference as to which Government governs; but that the Labour Party now has the responsibility of full political leadership, to lead and unite all the democratic forces under the hegemony of the working class, and thus prepare the way for the political power of the working class and the realisation of socialism. These conceptions, which spring from the living philosophy of Marxism and correspond to the living realities of the present struggle, are only beginning to be assimilated by the Labour Movement in this country in place of the old barren formula. Every sympathy needs to be extended in the process of transition to meet with understanding and respect the genuine difficulties that are felt. But at the same time it is also essential that those left socialists who are still tied by the old formulas should begin to think politically, to throw off their baby-shoes and face in all seriousness the realities of the present struggle and the desperately urgent issues of the present period.

IN view of these difficulties and controversies it is necessary to examine a little more carefully this question of "independence." The Labour Manifesto declares:

> Ever since the days of the Great War Labour has been consistently right and its opponents wrong in matters of foreign policy.

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It goes on to say that :

> We are told that in so grave an international situation the Labour Party should temporarily abandon its traditional policy of political independence.

The apparently complete innocence here shown with regard to the real history and rôle of the Labour Party as expressed in its official policy and leadership since 1914 is so devastating in its complacency that in the interests of future clearness it is necessary a little to take up what is here put forward. What is the real truth as against this rather fanciful picture ? It may sound harsh to say it, but in fact it is the most helpful and necessary thing that can be said, especially for the left socialists and traditionalists. The real truth is that *the Labour Party has never yet been really independent of capitalism, and we are proposing that the Labour Party should for the first time become independent by leading a People's Front.*

THE old traditional conception of the " independence " of the Labour Party since its foundation has been the separation from the Liberal and Conservative Parties. This was the first rough-and-ready expression of the conception of an independent working-class party ; and the conception performed a very important service in the early days to draw the Labour Movement away from the old acceptance of Liberal domination. But this conception was not and could not be more than a half-way stage. It could only reach its completion if it was developed and carried forward into the real *independence of the working class from capitalism.* But the opposition of the traditional leaders of the Labour Party to the class struggle, although their party was based on the organisations of the worker's struggle, has hitherto prevented this completion being carried through. Therefore the formal " independence " has been continually falsified in the practical policy.

THIS is the root contradiction of the Labour Party which Lenin placed his finger on already in the early days when he criticised the formulation of the Second International, drafted by Kautsky, in accepting the affiliation of the Labour Party in 1908.

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The resolution declared that :

> the Labour Party be permitted to attend International Socialist Congresses as, although it does not directly recognise the proletarian class struggle, it nevertheless wages the struggle and in fact and by its very organisation, which is dependent of bourgeois parties, is adopting the basis of the class struggle.

Lenin, while approving the acceptance of the affiliation of the Labour Party as representing " the first step of the really proletarian organisations of England towards a conscious class policy," criticised the formulation as misleading, and pointed out :

> That further steps are necessary cannot but be admitted in regard to a party which does not directly and clearly accept the principles of the class struggle. . . . . It was made to appear as if the International had certified that the Labour Party is *actually* waging a consistent class struggle, as if it was sufficient for the organised workers to form a separate labour group in parliament in order to become independent of the bourgeoisie *in the whole of their conduct.*

This is the crux of the question of independence.

THE refusal of the real independence of the working class from capitalism has continually falsified the formal parliamentary " independence." That is why the practical record of the Labour Party in actual politics, from MacDonald onwards, has caused continual heartaches to the very pioneers and militants who have fought most faithfully for its independence. The formal " independence " has been turned into practical dependence on capitalism. In the pre-war days the Labour Party under MacDonald became a tail of the Liberal Party. During the war the Labour Party sank its independence in the successive War Coalitions. So far from the Labour Party having been " consistently right in foreign policy " since 1914, it has been involved deeply in imperialist blunder after blunder. The Versailles Treaty, which is signed with the signatures of the statesmen of the Second International, was ratified by a unanimous Parliament without a single vote of opposition from the Labour Party. The first Labour Government carried through the Dawes Report of the financiers for the enslavement of Germany, which helped to sow the seeds for Hitler. The second Labour Government

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still boasted at the Hague to have secured extra spoils of reparations for Britain, and was acclaimed for its stand by the City. Nor did this rôle end with the open passing of MacDonald, Snowden and Thomas to capitalism. Over Abyssinia the Labour Party hailed Sir Samuel Hoare as " the Voice of Britain " and made possible the " National " Government's election victory of 1935. The record of fourteen months' support of the criminal policy of " non-intervention " is fresh in the memory of all. The continuity of line is remarkable and follows from the political basis. We would not wish to recall the ugly record at the present critical moment for any purposes of recrimination. But it is important that the real rôle should be understood in order to see how the formal " independence," as proclaimed by the right wing, can be the fig-leaf for the most complete dependence on capitalism —expressing itself in the present period in dependence on Chamberlain.

DAMNING proof of this at the very moment of the issue of the Labour Manifesto has been afforded by the rôle of Sir Walter Citrine—the apostle of opposition to the People's Front in the name of " independence "—at the International Federation of Trade Unions meeting at Oslo, when the question of Mexico came up. Here was an action of the Mexican Trade Unions, and a Mexican popular Government, acting with the support of the Trade Unions, to carry through a piece of Labour's own socialist programme by nationalising the oil wells and expropriating the foreign British and American capitalists in fully legal form with compensation. When Chamberlain and Halifax (the apostles of " non-intervention ") immediately sought to bluster and bully the Mexican Government into submission in a Note which the *Times* described as a model of " British plain speech," the Mexican Government considerably surprised them by replying with a Note which the *Times* found " truculent," and breaking off relations. An ironically perfect opportunity was thus afforded to the apostles of " independence " and " socialism," at the moment of the issue of their Manifesto, to show their support of both, their independence of Chamberlain and their support of Mexican socialism. Curiously

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enough, when the I.F.T.U. Executive wished to pass a resolution of congratulations and support to the Mexican Government and trade unions, Sir Walter Citrine and the British representatives came out in opposition. The connecting link between the " independent " British representatives and the Foreign Office and Chamberlain became indecently glaring to the Continental delegates.

INDEPENDENCE requires strength. Strength can only be based on the power of the mass movement. The refusal of working-class unity, the refusal to unite and lead all the democratic anti-fascist forces under the hegemony of a united working class, leads inevitably to weakness, to paralysis and impotence, and therefore to dependence on Chamberlain. This is the heart of the present political situation. And this is just the heart which the Labour Manifesto, with its anxious, fearful calculations about " doubtful allies," cannot see. The real question is far bigger than one of this or that particular party or group ; these are only the mechanics of the process. The real question is the unity of the working class, and the unity of all the democratic peace forces under the leadership of the working class upon the basis of a common immediate programme to meet the urgent needs of the present situation. The achievement of this unity on such a programme means the winning of millions at present inactive, apathetic or following the " National " Government. When the Conservatives have laboriously striven to keep alive " National Labour " and " National Liberal," simulacra without any living basis in the country, did they consider that they were wasting their efforts on valueless allies ? On the contrary, they knew that this show of a " national " front was worth millions of votes to them. But a real combination of a popular Democratic Front, corresponding to the wishes and needs of the majority of the people, would smash this simulacrum of a " national " front and win away the millions of hesitant voters who must be won to achieve a majority. This would give Labour the strength to achieve real independence in its political rôle, at the head of such a combination, in place of the present impotent dependence on Chamberlain.

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THE unity and strength of such a People's Front would lie in the unity of the mass movement and of the common programme. The comparison made by the Labour Executive with the disastrous experiences of the minority Labour Governments of 1924 and 1929 is singularly unfortunate. For it was precisely the character of these minority Labour Governments of MacDonald that they refused all co-operation or allies, that they followed the policy advocated by the Labour Executive, refused working-class unity, refused any attempt to win allies in the country, and expected the Liberals in Parliament to act as " patient oxen " and support them without any common programme. The outcome in each case showed the consequences of such a policy. It is worth recalling that MacDonald openly declared that he preferred to rule with a minority rather than a majority, in order to safeguard himself against this Labour supporters. And it is worth bearing in mind that the present Labour policy, if it were to reach its most favourable outcome, if it were not to result in the continued domination of Chamberlain, but were to bring Labour representation to the level of 1929 (of which there is at present no sign), would result once again in a minority Labour Government, a helpless, vacillating prisoner of capitalism, spreading disillusionment in Labour ranks and dissension among the wider democratic forces, and preparing the way for the rapid return of reaction and menace of fascism.

THE Labour Executive argues that a People's Front Government might prove " weak and indecisive," because of the varied character of its supporters, and thus give rise to the menace of a " rapid reaction towards Conservatism and a grave risk of Fascism." This is to ignore the fact that the real danger of fascism arises from the continued domination of Chamberlain. It is to argue that the danger of fascism would be greater under a Left Government, with a decisive popular majority and a positive anti-fascist programme, than under the continued domination of Chamberlain. All history proves the contrary. The Labour policy repeats at a new stage the disastrous policy of German Social Democracy, which refused unity with the Communist Party

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on the grounds that left unity would provoke fascism, and preferred to support Hindenburg as the safeguard against fascism. But Hindenburg only prepared the way for Hitler. On the other hand, in France and Spain the unity of the working class and democratic forces has held up the advance of fascism.

IN Spain the People's Front, on the basis of internal forces, would have been long ago completely victorious over fascism ; it is only the aggression of two major Powers that has created its difficulties. Similarly in France the domination of the People's Front on the basis of the internal situation would be decisive, if it were not for our failure to check reaction in Britain and the consequent heavy pressure of British reaction to help French reaction and create difficulties for the French People's Front. In each case the People's Front has proved itself the most powerful weapon against fascism ; and whatever difficulties have had to be met have arisen, not from any weakness of the policy in principle, but primarily and most directly from the absence of a People's Front in Britain. Here, in the helpless division of the democratic forces before reaction, is the critical centre of the menace of fascism. It is the disunity of the working class, the division of the democratic forces, the consequent unchecked domination and aggressiveness of reaction, and the consequent disheartenment of the divided working class and democratic forces without leadership, that creates the conditions for fascism.

THIS understanding of the real relation of forces governs the question of the fight for socialism, the aim of which is presented by the Labour Executive as an argument against the People's Front. To counterpose socialism and the People's Front in this way, to counterpose the interests of the working-class movement and the aims of a People's Front, is completely false. Here the recent answer of Maurice Thorez to questions raised in France, whether a "Workers' Front" should not be substituted for the Popular Front, is extremely apposite :

> It is not accurate to set up such an opposition between the

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> Workers' Front and the Popular Front. There would never have been a Popular Front unless beforehand there had been working-class unity. But the Popular Front, in gaining for the workers a little better standard of living and more liberty, has considerably strengthened the political position and the strength of the working class, enabling it to exercise an ever greater influence in the life of the country.
>
> One cannot consider as negligible the power of the C.G.T. with its 5,000,000 members, of whom 4,000,000 were gained at the victory of the Popular Front, nor the 320,000 members of the Communist Party, the 240,000 members of the Socialist Party, without counting the other sections of the working class.
>
> The Popular Front, conceived not as an occasional electoral agreement without a future, but as a durable and profound alliance between the working class and the middle classes, above all the peasantry, is an *absolute* condition of the victory of the working class in its daily struggle against fascism and against capitalism, for the safeguarding of democracy and the advent of socialism.

"THE road to peace," declares the Labour Party Executive, "lies through socialism." In other words, the fight for peace may not be undertaken until the fight for socialism has been achieved. But it is just while capitalism is still in power that the fight for peace is important. Every Socialist knows that only socialism can finally solve and end the contradictions of capitalism which give rise to war. But for that reason to abandon the fight within capitalism against capitalist war is in reality to abandon the fight against capitalism ; it is a policy, not to speed up socialism, but to speed up capitalist war. In the name of "socialism," it is help to the warmongers. This is contrary, not only to the policy of the entire international socialist movement, but the whole previously declared policy of the Labour Party. Contrast the previous standard statement in the official pamphlet "Labour's Foreign Policy," by Arthur Henderson :

> The Labour Party has stood consistently ever since the war for a programme of constructive measures designed to build up a stable system of peace by the establishment of permanent political international situations.
>
> *At no stage has the Party made its adhesion to this policy dependent upon a universal or a general change in the existing social order. It has never held that the attempt to secure inter-*

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> *national co-operation must await the triumph of Socialism throughout the world.* (Arthur Henderson: *Labour's Foreign Policy*, 1933, p. 4.)

Now, however, "the road to peace lies through socialism." Until socialism has been achieved, it is a crime for the working class and democratic forces to unite to defeat war. Is it not obvious that this great new discovery has been made by the Labour Executive majority, not through their passion to fight for socialism, but through their passion to fight against the People's Front?

"OUR people are more interested in to-day's bread than to-morrow's war," declared the Chief Woman Officer of the Labour Party to the Labour Women's Conference; and this new proclamation is now being bandied about in all official Labour propaganda as a supposed banner of the fight against a People's Front for peace. Thus in place of the old slogan "Bread and Peace," we have a new slogan, "Not Peace, but Bread." It would be difficult to find a more wicked slogan, or one more directly calculated to assist Chamberlain's war plans. The innocent lady who was made the mouthpiece to hand out this new line may not be aware of its implications; but it is in fact the direct sequel and counterpart of the old criminal catchword "War Means Work." To counterpose the fight for peace and the fight for bread in this way is to betray the responsibility of leadership. The fight for peace and the fight for bread are not opposites. They are parts of the same fight, against the same ruling class, and requiring the same unity. The programme of the People's Front is equally a programme for peace and for social gains for the workers, as the example of France has shown. Why separate one from the other? If we fail in the fight for peace, we shall equally fail in the fight for bread. Guns replace butter. Hunger and War are allies. Chamberlain aids fascism abroad and worsens the conditions of the workers at home. The unity of the fight against Chamberlain is the key to victory.

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SOCIALISM is not the first stage, but the *crowning achievement* of a long process of social struggle. To refuse the initial stages in the name of devotion to the last stage is not to hasten the last stage, but to prevent it ever being reached. To refuse necessary initial stages of the mobilisation of the working class and its allies in the immediate struggle against capitalist reaction and fascism, in the name of a supposed eagerness for the final conquest of political power by the working class and the building of socialism, is not to hasten that conquest of political power and socialism, but to make it impossible of attainment. To refuse the present urgent struggle against capitalist reaction and war in the name of a verbal devotion to "socialism" is not to be a fighter for socialism, but the best ally of reaction and war. This was the rôle of the P.O.U.M. in Spain, which in the name of "socialism" raised armed revolt to smash the People's Front and thereby fought on the same side as Franco. It is noteworthy that a clear-sighted Liberal, Wilfrid Roberts, M.P., has on the basis of practical experience discerned very precisely this analogy between the arguments of the P.O.U.M. and the arguments of the Labour Party Executive:

> This argument is not new to me. I studied it at first hand in Spain. Just a year ago it was settled by the resort to a moderate use of machine guns in the streets of Barcelona. If I did not feel so passionately on the subject I should think it exceedingly funny that the Executive of the Labour Party had been driven, after four attempts, to resort to the arguments of the P.O.U.M. and some of the Anarchist trade unions of Spain. It was this very argument that Socialism must come first that prevented for so long a real unity of resistance to General Franco and his German and Italian friends. With their backs to the wall the Spanish people have learnt their lesson. Need we wait until danger threatens our every homes before learning that disunity breeds disaster? (Wilfred Roberts, M.P., in the *Manchester Guardian*, May 19, 1938.)

It is unfortunate that the Labour Party Executive should need to learn the elements of Socialism and Marxism from a Liberal. But what this Liberal here sees is the common sense reality which every serious Socialist and Marxist equally recognises and which requires urgently to be understood by the whole Labour Movement.

R. P. D.

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Peace Alliance and the Future

BY SYDNEY R. ELLIOTT

THE GREAT CAUSE of the United Peace Alliance grows and grows, is destined to dominate democratic politics for months ahead. It has ceased to be, even among its critics, what it never was in the mind of its sponsor—a newspaper stunt as effervescent in its interest as the latest £2,500 Ideal Concert Party Competition, or a mere circulation-raiser like the mass distribution of cut-price copies of *The Book of Life*. No newspaper stunt could evoke such spontaneous support and arouse in millions of democrats such fervour for positive action. No newspaper stunt could call forth, within a period of four weeks, three condemnatory manifestoes from official Labour, and survive. Manifesto number one, standing pat on Conference decisions rendered sterile by the march of events, banged the door in everybody's face. Manifesto number two, issued for the special benefit of Aylesbury electors, banged the door in the Liberal Party's face. Manifesto number three, declares the *Daily Herald*, with a satisfaction I share heartily, bangs the door in nobody's face.

Why, then, does the idea of the United Peace Alliance persist? The reason is twofold. The United Peace Alliance answers every case of its opponents. It answers, also, every need of the millions of progressive men and women who see clearly the nature of the dangers now encompassing our Peace, our Democracy, and our Freedom.

THE LABOUR MONTHLY Readers are familiar enough with the facts of the foreign situation. They start at the Ottawa Conference of 1932. There a fiscal fence was erected round the Empire. The "have not" powers were shut off from access to raw materials, except on onerous terms. Great Britain told the world that, League or no League, her motto in foreign affairs henceforth would be "what we have we hold." The "economic rearmament" race was initiated in Europe.

The destruction of the Disarmament Conference and the betrayals of China, Abyssinia, Austria and Spain derived from Ottawa's return to crude Imperialism. But the chain of fact possesses yet another link, forged by the agitation which revealed recently that, after four years of effort and the expenditure of many millions of public money, Great Britain's air arm is not adequate to the task of defending our shores against Hitler's bombers.

Consider that revelation in relation to the following facts:

In 1931 when the Labour Government was hurled from office,

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Great Britain was all-powerful in armaments, measured in terms of Collective Security.

In 1934-5, while Germany was still unarmed, the City of London was permitted to lend money to Hitler for munition making, Vickers were allowed to sell him tanks, and an Anglo-German Naval Agreement was negotiated—all in breach of the Versaille Treaty and our solemn obligations under the Covenant of the League of Nations.

In 1935 Mr. Baldwin's infamous "our Navy is inefficient" bleat exercised a major influence in securing the return of the National Conservative Government.

What is the conclusion? That, on their own confession, those Tories who parade their patriotism and boast their love of Empire have been guilty of high treason. They have tricked both State and Empire into military insecurity in order to scarify the electorate out of its political support of the Collective Peace system.

The Anglo-Italian Pact, dictated by Mussolini, is the first fruit of this foul folly. It postulates the murder of Spanish Democracy and the assistance of British finance in the Fascist conquest of unconquered Abyssinia. It postulates the spread of Fascism from the Baltic to the Black Sea, across our Empire communications, right into Africa, and over all three borders of the French Republic. It postulates the stabilising of two Capitalist Empires and the creation of two Fascist Empires, making of European Democracy a desolation and calling it Peace.

At the end of this sombre prospect is the encirclement of Russia, an attack on the world's first mighty experiment in Socialism, and the death of every hope of democratic advance for us, for our children, and for our children's children.

That, in brief outline, is the world outlook. But the Crisis does not await another move on the international chess-board for its development and its deepening. The Crisis has been developing and will deepen here at home.

Since 1931 our National Debt has increased by £650,000,000 and the burden of taxation by £155,000,000 a year—the equivalent of 3s. in the £ of income-tax. Sir John Simon has introduced the first of a series of £1,000,000,000 Budgets. In addition, defence expenditure in the region of another £1,500,000,000 is contemplated. If this economic burden—the price of Imperialism—continues, no amount of political magic is going to prevent it from smothering democratic reform. We are driving straight to bankruptcy. We are fomenting, in Great Britain, every one of the economic evils afflicting the dictator States since 1934; evils that have given our German and Italian brothers guns, but robbed them of their butter, their Democracy, and their Freedom. And the weapons of economic and social Fascism are being shaped now on the anvil of rearmament.

Since 1931, on the basis of Labour legislation designed for different

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purposes, every one of the home food producing industries—milk, meat and cereals—has been canalised and converted into a gigantic monopoly legalised by the State. The processes of legislation by delegation and Orders in Council have been adopted to obtain State endowment of coal, steel, cotton and transport. The money-power is guaranteed against its gambling losses by the tax-payer and protected against foreign competition by a State directed Exchange Equalisation Fund.

Trade Union growth, hedged round by the Trade Disputes Act of 1927, has not been permitted to keep pace with the change and expansion of industry. The Co-operative Movement has been subjected to penal taxation in its home trade, and to grave restriction in its foreign commerce. Municipal development has been frustrated by passing on to local rates the national burden of poor relief and by the capture of new fields of public enterprise for the semi-private forms of Capitalism represented by the Central Electricity Board.

While no method of purging industrial and economic Democracy of its fine spirit of adventure has been neglected, freedom of thought and expression has wilted under a frontal attack. The Sedition Bill has been expanded. The Official Secrets Act is being given wider application. There is a steady and increasing encroachment upon civil liberties. In the interests of Fascism, National Conservative Governments have not hesitated to sacrifice the safety of Home and Empire. Does anybody deny that, in these same interests, this National Government will hesitate to destroy the rights and privileges of British Democracy ?

There, as it seems to me, a loyal member of the Labour Party and a Socialist without prefix or suffix, are the elements of Crisis. I see no final solution outside Socialism. But my Labour Party Socialism, although I hope it is well-founded in my conception of history, of science, and of economics, is not a panacea to be produced like a rabbit out of a Transport House conjurer's hat. It is a day-to-day experience requiring courage and intelligence for its achievement; requiring, above all, Democracy and Peace and Freedom for its pursuit.

Hence my sponsorship of the United Peace Alliance. Because millions of rank-and-file Socialists share my hopes of Socialism as well as my fears for Democracy, the idea of the United Peace Alliance has re-created an enthusiasm which died during the seven lean years of National Conservative Government.

I should have thought that my leader would have welcomed the United Peace Alliance. Less than a year ago he refused to rule out the possibility of an alliance of progressive parties " in the event of the imminence of world crisis."* To-day, however, he seems to share the view expressed in the Labour Executive's third manifesto, that democratic unity cannot succeed unless a considerable number of

*C. R. Attlee: *The Labour Party in Perspective* (page 124).

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Conservative members of Parliament now supporting him were to rebel against Mr. Chamberlain's authority !

Must we await the break up of the Conservative Party before realising, to paraphrase the words of this Manifesto, that a new situation has arisen ? What clearer proof do we ask of the urgency of the new situation than the fact that Mr. Chamberlain can stamp on his election pledges, spit in the face of Political Democracy and escape destruction at the hands of Members of Parliament elected by popular suffrage ? The very failure of Conservatives to revolt while the Cabinet is filching our freedom is a vital reason why the Chamberlain Government must be cleared out at once.

I hold no brief for Liberals who, say the Labour Executive, were unreliable allies of the minority Labour Governments of 1924 and 1929. Apart from the hard historical fact that the Liberal Party fought Labour in the constituencies in 1924 and 1929 and went to the House of Commons in opposition both to the Labour Party and the Conservative Party, I accept the view that the Liberal Party, like my own, has its proportion of diehards. The Peace Alliance will not appeal to them. But the Peace Alliance is capturing the imagination of the Liberal voters without whose support no democratic majority is possible and whose present policy, both foreign and domestic, is hardly distinguishable from Labour's Immediate Programme.

I hold no brief for Communists who, say the Labour Executive, have been disruptive. I reject entirely the idea that in the post-war period the Communists have been always right and the Labour Party always wrong. But I am not impressed by the argument which runs thus : a few years ago the Communists were too bad to be good; to-day they are too good to be true.

The Peace Alliance is based on the assumption that all democratic parties appreciate the transcending need for unity in the face of Fascist menace, that they are prepared to sink their differences of doctrine temporarily in order to preserve and expand the principles that are vital to the very existence of each of them—the principles of Democracy and Freedom. As leader of the Peace Alliance, Labour would require that its collaborators produce their *bona-fides*. As the strongest partner in the Alliance, Labour would tolerate neither unreliability nor disruption from its allies. The appeal of the Alliance is that Labour, a national political party, should rise to the grave responsibility placed upon it by the Crisis, and should provide the national medium through which the country can give effect to its determination to save Spain, to promote Peace, and to preserve Democracy.

One argument against the Peace Alliance remains. It is that Labour, in the General Election of 1940, can win an independent majority.

The evidence supporting this argument is based on the recent series of by-elections in which Labour, with active Liberal and

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Communist support, has defeated the Tory. These by-elections were held while electoral indignation against the sell-out to Mussolini and the betrayal of Spanish Democracy has been at fever heat. The battle of the next General Election, however, will be fought on issues of Mr. Chamberlain's choosing. Unless Liberal and Communist support, now casual, is rendered certain by the creation of a Peace Alliance, several of the seats recently won will be lost, and Labour will tackle the enormous problem of doubling its present Parliamentary representation.

Can Labour do it ? Look at Lichfield. According to the *Daily Herald*, an election machine had to be improvised there within a few weeks. In plain words, the constituency organisation which, in 1929, won a Labour victory, had been allowed to fall into decay. To this evidence that Labour's election machine might not be expansive enough to win a General Election even under favourable conditions, add these facts : in the Southern and Eastern Counties, excluding London, the National Government hold 151 seats and Labour 16 ; in the Midlands the National Government hold 67 seats and Labour 19. If that position remained unchanged, Labour could win two out of every three seats now held by the Government in Scotland, in the North and in South Wales—could win sweeping, dramatic victories—and still be 50 short of a bare majority. Labour, indeed, could win every Government seat now held by a majority of 5,000 votes and still be short of a bare majority. But a Peace Alliance could raise the democratic representation in the Southern and Eastern Counties to 56 and in the Midlands to 44. A Peace Alliance could win 340 seats and a clear majority.

To face these facts, I am told, is defeatism. I answer that to ignore them is treason.

And after the Alliance has done its job, has removed the war menace and restored our hope of democratic progress ? Its partners, their individual electoral machines intact, would go their separate ways and pursue their separate aims. But having learned the art of co-operating in defence of Democracy, they might very well join Labour in the final struggle for the classless society. Certainly, Labour would emerge with enhanced strength and prestige. It would approach the electorate with a confidence born of achievement. Labour's majority would be within our grasp. Socialism would be within our reach.

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The Trade Unions and Unity

BY JOHN MAHON

A STRONG CURRENT for working class unity and for a people's front is beginning to run through the British Labour movement. Its clearest expression as yet is in the Labour Party and the Co-operative Party. The sustained efforts of the four elected left wing members of the Labour Party Executive, and the proposal for a united peace alliance are both expressions of this current and in turn stimulants to its increase. It is clear that great changes of opinion are taking place within the ranks of both these parties. But the resistance to unity continues and the chiefs of this resistance, the Citrine-Bevin group, are still able to use the voting power and the prestige of the trade unions in the fight to hold back the advance of unity.

What is going on in the trade unions, why is it that Citrine-Bevin are able to use them as a base in their fight against unity? What is happening to the unity movement in the trade unions? What is necessary in order to ensure the victory of unity, by gaining the trade unions for it and thereby taking away the base of those who are resisting it? These questions are vital ones, for the trade unions are the decisive masses of British Labour. Neither the constituency organisations of the Labour Party, nor the Co-operative wing, can bring about unity unless the trade unions are won. But it is an undisputable fact that far too little is done to win over the trade union masses and their officials to the understanding of what unity means and how it can be won.

The blunt fact has to be faced. It is no use seeing only reactionary leaders. The decisive masses of industrial workers are not yet won for unity. That is the problem, and their are no short cuts to its solution. All the resources of all the supporters of both working class unity and the people's front ought to be directed far more than they are to the winning over of this highly organised and mature core of industrial workers and their officials.

Is there a special problem here; is it necessary to do something different from ordinary propaganda if we are to gain the day on the trade union field?

There is in the trade unions the general political problem, that of winning over to unity the great mass of members who in the past have been either hostile, because they followed reformism, or apathetic, because they did not see any connection between politics and trade matters. This problem is undoubtedly in general the same as that in

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the Labour Party and may be approached in the same way, that is by general political analysis and discussion of the approach of fascism, the war danger and so on. But there is a further problem in the trade unions. The reactionary leadership base their control of the trade union bloc vote which they use against unity not so much on a direct discussion as to the merits or demerits of unity, as upon the results of their economic policy and the services they have rendered to the workers in the past. The battle of political ideas in the trade union world is complicated by the fact that many of the members attach far more importance to material results of policy, such as wages, hours and conditions, than to the statement of policy as such. Hereto the reactionaries have been able to use economic questions as a basis for their political resistance to unity. In this sense there is a special problem to be tackled by the forces of unity in the trade union world, and something in addition to ability to argue is required for its solution. *Unity must be shown in fact, in the daily struggle, as a method of directly improving the position of the wage worker and a means of building the trade unions, if we are to bring the great masses of trade unionists into the struggle against Citrine-Bevin.*

With these considerations in mind, let us return to the question, "What is going on in the trade unions?"

In the sphere of agreements an important problem has now to be faced. In recent years the practice has been introduced of including in return for very small concessions in wages clauses which have prevented any further demand for improvements being made for some considerable time. Now that a number of national agreements are expiring, or on the point of expiry, the whole membership could with advantage focus its attention upon the proposed content of the new agreements, and in particular could ask what has been the results of these clauses tying up the unions.

The *engineers*, through their Joint Trades Movement, agreed with the employers in July, 1937, to accept a wage increase in two instalments on condition that no further local application for an increase should be made for three months after the second instalment became operative. This ran parallel to a national " gentleman's agreement " that there shall be no alteration in national wage rates until six months after the last alteration becomes operative. In the *building* trades the 1935 agreement provided wage increases in two instalments while binding the unions to stablisation of wages until 1940, leaving some loopholes for " exceptional " and " differential " demands. The *printing* trades in October, 1937, concluded an agreement securing the 45-hour week on condition that no major alteration of wages or conditions could be proposed till 1940, although again some loopholes were left.

Events have shown that these provisions have meant a loss, in terms of hard cash, for the union membership. They bind the unions to inactivity at the very period when the cost of living is steadily rising

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and looks like continuing to rise. They bind the unions at the very period when for the first time for years the economic situation affords the opportunity for pressure on the employers to win back some of the ground lost since 1926. The employers have once again taken advantage of the weakness of the trade union leadership. The idea of industrial peace was used after 1926 to put over wage cuts without trade union resistance. Now the same idea is being used to prevent a struggle for wage increases, while profits soar and the cost of living steadily rises. How susceptible the employers are to the threat of mass movement is shown by the capitalist reaction to the demand for holidays with pay. For years they ignored it but now when it showed signs of becoming a mass movement concessions were granted in many districts and industries, and legislative action is promised in order to draw away strength from the trade unions who might have championed this demand everywhere.

This policy of concessions by the trade union leaders without regard to the fighting power, opportunities and necessities of the trade union membership, is essentially a policy of disuniting the working class. It prevents the mobilisation of union resources and leaves the different unions without a common ground for united action. The policy of united action applied in this field would mean an all-in demand for wage increases to compensate for the cost of living and to get back from the employers some of that which has been lost since 1926 and which they can well afford to pay from their accumulating profits. New agreements, without shackling clauses, bearing with them substantial wage increases and other concessions are needed in every industry. A mass campaign for such agreements ought to be one of the concerns of the unity movement and it ought to begin immediately for it is no use waiting till the expiry of agreements is on top of us.

In the field of the *strike movement*, the first impression made during a glance at the last six months is that of extraordinarily few strikes. Is it not a surprising thing, and a danger signal, that in the very period in which the idea of political united action has made extensive progress, the strike movement has been so limited? When we remember that the progress of unity in France and the development of the C.I.O. and the united movement in the U.S.A. were accompanied by great mass industrial upheavals of the working class we cannot but emphasise the importance for the whole prospects of realising unity in this country of the development of the movement against the employers.

The enemies of unity are perfectly well aware of the importance of the industrial struggle. It was Bevin, the main opponent of working class unity and the people's front, who organised the defeat of the London bus strike last year by assuring the carrying of bus passengers by the trams, trolley buses and underground. This blow not only broke the spearhead of the movement for shorter hours by direct action, it warded off what might have been a rapid extension of the forces which

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wished to combine a forward movement against the employers with the struggle for political unity. The unity drive has since paid insufficient attention to the work of overcoming the effects of Bevin's stroke and of reviving the forward movement in industry.

Such strikes as have taken place in last six months give rather the impression of outpost skirmishes, or of actions by detachments, than of the beginnings of any general engagement. Seven aircraft strikes, involving some 5,000 workers, were all defensive and mainly successful. The employers tried by introducing non-union labour and by seeking the reduction of prices, or by commencing dilution, to gain back some of the ground won by the Aircraft Shop Stewards Movement during the previous 18 months of its drive to organise the industry. The employers failed, the aircraft workers stood firm, maintaining their positions without any official help, but unable to press forward their own offensive because the rest of the engineering industry was lagging behind. The youth strikes, mainly of metal workers, showed a tremendous swing towards trade unionism, most inadequately supported by the main body of the adult workers. The strike of the cinema projectionists was a further example of the swing of the unorganised towards trade unionism, for trade union recognition was its main demand. It was noteable for the rapid support given by the E.T.U. Executive which did not allow the difficulties of the situation to hinder it from coming to the aid of the strikers. When we remember how a short time ago the E.T.U. Executive was dealing very drastically with its London committee on the very issue of recognising strikes, the change of outlook is significant. In a special category stand the strikers of stevedores and dockers who refused to load war material for the fascist powers on the *Haruna Maru* and other vessels. These actions were political strikes in the clearest sense of the term, and an indication of the very deep feeling being aroused among the working class by the ominous developments of the political situation.

All the strikes suffered from the absence of a full comprehension of what unity means on the trade union field. What great advances could have been made if the rest of the engineers came up to the position of the aircraft men and went forward with them, if the adult trade unionists had not just stood by and patted the youth on the back, but had joined in the struggle, if the cinema strikers and their union had understood the importance of preparing for the strike by winning unity with the cinema going workers and public !

But it would be a mistake to see only the collisions which actually took place. Below the surface there is going on a mass of organising activity and increasing discussion on problems which has not been seen since the months leading up to 1926. The outstanding advance is that of the South Wales Miners Federation which, under the leadership of its Communist president, has liquidated non-political unionism and company unionism and is on the march towards 100 per cent. member-

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ship and the closed shop in the coalfield. This is a tremendous achievement, for no one can doubt that company unionism is a foothold for fascism. If we had a General Council worthy of the name these successes of the S.W.M.F. and the manner of their achievement would have been broadcast to the world of labour as an inspiration to trade union recruitment everywhere. In other industries advances are also going on. The Transport Union has done a great job in bringing the lorry drivers in in great numbers. A general recruitment is going on in most unions. In London, great stronghold of non-unionism with over 2,000,000 workers eligible for trade unionism but not organised, there are almost daily disputes around the recognition question, the shop stewards movement in south-east London is extending to many new factories in metal, the bakers union begins a reorganising drive, the trend towards trade unionism continues among the blackcoated and professional workers, nurses, doctors, musicians, actors, technicians, bank and insurance officials. When we remember that the traditional preparation of the British working class for big battles is a stream into the trade unions, we have every basis for seeing the present phase in trade unionism as a preparatory one, a phase in which the long retreat and the rearguard actions which accompanied it is giving way to the preparations for a great advance. If those who see the significance of unity will find the way to work properly in the trade union sphere, this advance can become a mighty sweep on the same scale as the advance of French trade unionism or of the C.I.O. in the United States. The same forward sweep which draws new millions into industrial struggles will draw them also in the political struggles.

Unity has meaning both politically and industrially; it means the mobilisation of class forces with a class outlook. Reactionary leaders have broken the unity of trade unionism as far as action is concerned, they have sectionalised the movement and thereby weakened it. The time has come to repair these breaches, and for the entire trade union movement to move forward—a clear perspective of united action against the employers, a mighty drive to bring in to the ranks the unorganised millions, the demand for new agreements in all industries, wage advances and other concessions, the building of trade union organisation at the vital point, the factory. The more the trade union struggle goes forward against the employers, the more economic successes are secured in alliance with the rising political ferment, the sooner will the trade union membership be won for unity and a page in British history turned.

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The Swastika over the Balkans

BY DOROS ALASTOS

THE FORCIBLE ANNEXATION of Austria by Germany, in the face of indignant world opinion, cut like lightning through the haze of false beliefs and sedate hopes, and revealed the menace hanging over Middle and South Eastern Europe, in its stark, cruel glare.

The catastrophic importance of Germany will be increased as a result, and her trading dominance over South Eastern Europe will become more marked. And the greater this dominance, the more secure will Germany be from the point of view of obtaining adequate supplies of raw materials direly needed by her war industries. By completely controlling the resources of Austria, with Hungary in a state of economic and political subservience and the other Balkan countries tied up in the " barter " arrangements, Germany is astride the Continent from the Baltic to the Aegean. The challenge has been thrown out. The first step of Germanic expansion has been accomplished with the successful assimilation of Austria. Nazi policy envisages further a system of alliances, and eventually a system of Nazified states stretching south-east across Europe and the Middle East as the necessary perquisite to world domination. In this respect, the states of the Balkan Peninsula, being in the way of the Nazi march, and against which are arraigned to-day not only the might of German arms but also the poisons of German propaganda, are of special significance. It depends primarily on the action and attitude of these states, reinforced and assisted by the democracies of the West, whether German aggression can be stopped on the borders of Slovenia.

ECONOMIC QUESTIONS

The Anschluss will enable Germany to undertake a more vigorous exploitation of Austrian resources. Styrian iron ores are greatly superior to those of Germany, and exist in very large quantities, while steel production amounts to over half-a-million tons a year. Field Marshal Goering's telegram to Dr. von Seyss-Inquart, a week after the German occupation, that the four-year plan was extended to Austria and " will be successfully executed on a still broader basis " permits the conclusion that the production of the Austrian steel works will be greatly increased, and a further all-round contribution to the heavy engineering and armament side will be offered by Austria to Germany's industrial structure. Austria's contribution in base metals will be comparatively

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small, though there is a considerable amount of copper, lead and zinc to be exploited. The aluminium production—an essential feature of modern armaments—is again low, but the fact that Austrian water power is to be harnessed to the war economy of the Nazis, coupled with the proximity of bauxite deposits (bauxite is the raw material of aluminium) in Hungary and Yugoslavia, will undoubtedly lead to a more extensive production of aluminium.

But still more disturbing are the external economic implications of the Anschluss. As Dr. Schacht, the ablest contemporary economic blackmailer, boastfully said: "the gate of the East is now open" and that Germany will continue with far greater force behind her "the mission of Austria to inspire respect for the German name, notably in South Eastern Europe." Now that the German frontier marches with the Yugoslav, German trade will be more prominent in the Balkans. Already the catastrophic consequences of the June 1936 agreements are being felt in the Balkans. It was then that Dr. Schacht undertook a whirlwind tour of the Balkan capitals to negotiate trade agreements, the significance of which escaped at the time the notice of orthodox economic commentators. But Germany had already discovered the strength laying in the hands of a debtor state and successfully utilised it. With her own finances strained on account of vigorous, if clandestine, rearmament, with her economy diverted towards war industry, she found it necessary to import, on a greater scale, foodstuffs and raw materials. It was to the Danubian and Balkan countries that she turned, which countries, having felt the full blast of the economic crisis, and because of tariffs and restrictions having lost their markets in England and France, welcomed the opening of the German market to them. The process of German economic expansion South East began in 1934. By 1936 practically all the Danubian and Balkan countries became creditors to Germany. For three years they have been selling goods on a rapidly rising scale without being paid for them. Germany's inability to meet her obligations owing to her lack of foreign exchange resulted in the accumulation of "frozen" credits. And from this position (that of an insolvent debtor) Dr. Schacht shrewdly grasped the advantage to bend the Danubian and Balkan countries to his will.

Nazi diplomatic negotiations are usually conducted at the point of the pistol. Dr. Schushnigg, invited to Berchtesgaden for discussion by Hitler, was presented with an ultimatum. Dr. Schacht found it not unnecessary to negotiate in a similar way. He held over the Balkan statesmen the threat of devaluation. If they could not agree to his proposed "barter" arrangement, all the credits accumulated in Germany would be wiped out in a sea of inflation. The "frozen" balances could be liquidated only in the form of German goods, and as Germany can manufacture chiefly armaments, it was in that form that the debts could be repaid. As a result of this visit, imports were

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restricted from England and America by a decree issued by M. Letitza, the Yugoslav Finance Minister, providing at the same time for an import system giving Germany through her " clearing mark " a virtual grip over Yugoslav trade. Greece had to readjust her import list, to the detriment of British trade, and to rely chiefly on Germany in the future for the supply of armaments for the programme of rearmament on which dictator Metaxas embarked. Under the pressure of the German trade drive, many adaptations had to be made in the Bulgarian economic structure. Soya beans—formerly unkown in Bulgaria—are now being exported to the tune of £150,000 annually. Sunflower seeds, pork dripping and other foodstuffs, which were hardly exported previously, have found a market in Germany. On the basis of this " imposed " agreement Germany consolidated her position and wields to-day an unparalleled economic dominance over South Eastern Europe. All these countries (Rumania, Yugoslavia, Hungary, Bulgaria and Greece) are chiefly agricultural communities and have been trying of late to reduce their dependence on manufactured imports by developing their own industrial machinery. But the extension of German influence, with the voracious demand on agricultural products, suggests that this process will be stopped.

What is even more ominous is that dependence on the Germanic market will tend towards turning this group of states into satellites of the German political system. In 1937 Greece sent 39 per cent. of her total exports to Germany, Bulgaria 47 per cent., Hungary 40 per cent., Yugoslavia just over one-third and Rumania slightly under one-third. The significance of this becomes fairly obvious. These six states are literally dependent to-day for the export of their goods, or the disposition of their products, on the German market. And as long as they are economically dependent on Germany, can they adopt a political attitude calculated to arrest the Nazi expansion northwards ?

It is a sharp and devastating commentary on the short sightedness of the National Government and the pre-Popular Front French Governments, that they let their privileged political and economic position in the Balkans slip smoothly into the more ruthless and more energetic German hands. It is not an exaggeration to say that the Danubian dependence on the German and Italian markets has had a profound influence in shaping the course of developments in Central Europe. Up to 1930 Danubian and Balkan products had a good market in France, where practically every state had a favourable balance to its credit, as they were selling more to France than they were buying from her. With the deepening of the world economic crisis, French trade barriers were being gradually raised. Corresponding to that, the British tariffs, following upon the Ottawa Agreement, shut out a certain amount of goods, and gradually drove those countries to be dependent on the German and Italian markets. The half-hearted policy of sanctions told relatively more heavily upon these small states which, following

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the lead of Britain rallied, even at the expense of major economic loss, to support the League's policy against a brutal and blatant aggression.

Sanctions helped Germany's game. Most of the Balkan countries, losing the Italian market, gave Germany her opportunity. From Yugoslavia she undertook to import 60 per cent. of the goods formerly exported to Italy (but not paying for them) and a considerable amount of oil from Rumania, becoming by 1936 the best customer for Rumanian oil. These advantages culminated in the "imposition" of the Schacht trading agreements.

If the direct economic effects of the absorption of Austria by Germany do not appear particularly significant, its indirect consequences are of such magnitude that they could not and indeed have not, escaped entirely the attention of even reactionary politicians. That Germany to-day is in a position, by virtue of her control over Vienna and the influence she exercises over Hungary, to isolate Czechoslovakia by cutting her road, rail and river communications almost entirely with the rest of Europe, has been voiced by among others Mr. Winston Churchill, both in the House of Commons and in the press. But what has escaped the bourgeois critics of the Anschluss, is that the whole economic problem of the Danubian and Balkans states is bound insolubly together. Germany can only isolate and strangle Czechoslovakia in so far as she can maintain and strengthen her economic dominance over Hungary and the rest of the countries of South Eastern Europe, and in so far as she can be supplied with abundant foodstuffs and raw materials from those countries.

It is significant that not a single one of those countries at present tied to the chariot wheel of German economy, is particularly happy about it. They are forced to sell their products at low prices, and buy German manufactured goods at higher prices than they could be secured from either Britain or France. The Schacht Agreements are exploited by Germany, not only for the purpose of providing herself with foodstuffs and raw materials, but also (by re-exporting those materials to England, France, Holland and other countries) as a means to provide herself with foreign currency. For instance, tobacco is the most important export commodity of all these countries and if British or French tobacco manufacturers could only be persuaded to increase their imports of it, the outlook for both British and French trade with the Balkans would be greatly improved. As it is, Germany is providing the principal market and profiting by it accordingly. This tobacco, as in the case of hemp, after being cut, packed and standardised in Germany, is sold in Brussels and Amsterdam at prices far above their original cost. Thus benefiting by her "barter" system, Germany is hoarding foreign currency for the buying outside of materials required for her armaments, and when towards the end of 1936 Yugoslavia, on the grounds that Germany was utilising her exports in order to enrich her bankrupt treasury with foreign funds, demanded payment

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in free exchange for lead, zinc, ferro-silicium and hides in addition to wheat and maize, Germany retorted by threatening denunciation of the German-Yugoslav Commercial Treaty, and without further notice, stopped issuing permits for Yugoslav imports. One-third of the total Yugoslav trade suddenly came to a standstill. The Yugoslav Government was faced with the cruel dilemma of either capitulating or losing her principal market and as no encouragement was forthcoming from the West, she had to accept the German demands.

As long as other countries, particularly Great Britain and France, keep their markets shut to Balkan goods, the Balkan countries will continue to trade with Germany as an alternative to economic disaster. And as long as no determined effort is made to liberate them from the vicious oppression of German economy, these states cannot be called upon to provide a salutary barrier against the gradual penetration of the Nazi virus into their political structure, and neither can it permanently block the fearful consideration of their eventual submission to Nazi military might. If, on the other hands, a successful economic solution can be found, a definite barrier against German aggression can be established, and the responsibility for this initiative and this adjustment rests principally with the two great democracies of the West.

POLITICAL AND MILITARY PROSPECTS

The successful accomplishment of the Anschluss has thrown the whole of the Balkan States into confusion and consternation. It brought sharply to their notice the reality of the German danger and equally sharply the cowardly detachment of the National Government from developments in Central Europe, which detachment has acted as an insurance to aggression. Indeed, the National Government can boast of truly alarming successes which have attended their efforts after seven years of office. By condoning the tearing up of the military clauses of the Treaty of Versailles and the enforcement of conscription in Germany and by accepting the remilitarisation of the Rhineland, they have deliberately acquiesced to the destruction of any restraint against Hitler's expansion in Central and Eastern Europe. For as long as the demilitarised zone around the Rhine was in existence, Germany was incapable of any military adventure without the gravest of risks attending such attempt.

It will not be out of place to record here briefly the grim sequence of violations and aggressions following upon the National Government's policy. First came the direct encouragement embodied in the Anglo-German Naval Treaty, and second, the British refusal to associate with France in offsetting the Rhineland coup. The result was that German aggression gathered momentum. The Nazification of Danzig followed, then came the denunciation of the river clauses of the Treaty of Versailles which was, in itself, a potential mortal blow to Czecho-

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slovak trade ; then the German-Japanese anti-communist agreement, and the dastardly invasion of Spain along with Signor Mussolini's fascist legionaries. And as a crowning blow to European peace, the Anschluss, with all its far-reaching effects and tremendous implications.

Impassivity (not to say encouragement) and the refusal to face Nazism in its attempts at economic omnipotence, led to the strengthening of Nazi influence and the steady penetration and permeation of Nazi doctrines in South Eastern Europe. Dr. Rosenberg's office in Berlin spent prodigious sums of money on propaganda in Rumania, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Greece. The Germans of Yugoslavia and Rumania were organised in Nazi movements and efforts were made to develop Nazi parties from among the traditionally reactionary and anti-minority elements in both these countries. Characteristic of the thoroughness and long-range aims of the Nazi expansionists is the minute care with which they lay their plans and the ruthless efficiency with which they open inroads of aggression in the " doomed " countries. Long before the rape of Austria was effected, Nazis, through Yugoslav agents, bought huge tracts of land in Slovenia, adjoining the Austrian frontier, and leading through some German districts towards the Adriatic. The purpose of this is quite clear ; Hitler in the future is not going to march through Yugoslavia as an aggressor but as the liberator of the 600,000 Germans, and the defender of German property !

In spite of the pro-German leanings of relatively all the Balkan governments and their rabid Fascist character, there is a genuine feeling of apprehension throughout the Balkans as regards German designs on their national independence. The democratic forces of those countries, for long kept under the military boot of the " Royal " dictatorships, are coming to the fore in greater strength to combat the new danger. The arrival of German troops on the frontier of Slovenia was the signal for powerful democratic demonstrations throughout that province, as well as in Croatia. In Belgrade, in the Skupshtina, Dr. Stoyadinovich's policy of friendship with the dictators was denounced as one of national suicide while the people outside greeted him with shouts against Hitler and Mussolini. So vast were the crowds that Father Korosetz' military police did not attempt to disperse them. The anger and indignation felt against Dr. Stoyadinovich is heightened by the knowledge that his government, more than any other, has been responsible for the breaking up, in all but name, of the Little Entente.

The Yugoslav General Staff in a recent secret memorandum to the Regency purports to know of a plan of the German High Command which details the future policy of German expansion. According to the memorandum (a brief summary of which came to the knowledge of the author, the authenticity of which he has no reason to doubt) Germany will concentrate at first on the subjugation of Hungary where,

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in spite of the ruling Horthy clique's outwardly anti-Hitler policy, the Nazi movement is considerable. More so, as Hungary is friendless and without allies, with Mussolini across Gross Deutschland condemned to the position of passive spectator. Thence the Nazi legions will march to " liberate " the Germans and Hungarians inhabiting Transylvania and the Banat (in Rumanian territory) but actually in order to secure the Rumanian oil and get possession of the Rumanian granaries assisted by the Rumanian Fascist parties. And then by joining with Poland, Germany will reduce Czechoslovakia without firing a shot, before any sustained effort at expansion South Eastwards is undertaken.

It is rumoured in Balkan diplomatic circles that it was the knowledge of this plan (communicated to Bucharest by Belgrade) which forced King Carol to take action against the Iron Guardists. It must be noted that the Monarch's action was not actuated by any democratic feelings. Democrats and anti-Fascists have for years been the " cherished " victims of the Rumanian Siguranza. While the Fascists were allowed full liberty of action and given protection, in order that their troopers would hunt down and murder democrats, jews, revolutionaries and members of the national minorities. It was the communists and anti-fascists who have undergone unspeakable tortures at the hands of sadistic police officials and suffered the horrors of the Rumanian prisons. Driven by dictatorial tendencies, Carol experimented with a fascist administration, but world-wide indignation and a relatively small financial pressure and some hints from Britain, forced him to retrace his steps. But he did not call M. Michalake, the leader of the strong Democratic Peasant Party to the Premiership. Instead, through the agency of the aged Patriarch Miron Christea and several tested courtiers, he established a government with the purpose of administering his own policy. But this action, however condemnable, allows the possibility that Carol will attempt to find an accommodation within a revitalised Little Entente for the preservation of his dynasty, and incidentally, the preservation of Rumanian independence.

The chief stumbling block to such a revitalisation is the attitude of Yugoslavia which, while professing fidelity to the Entente, pursues systematically a policy of friendship with the dictators.

King Boris, equally menaced by Nazi political dominance, sought to curb the influence of the Bulgarian Nazi leader, the notorious Professor Tsankov, by establishing his own dictatorship. In Greece, Dictator Metaxas is maintaining his office by virtue of the economic and political influence which Germany exercises over the country. But as in the cases of Yugoslavia and Rumania, the dictatorships of the last two countries are " Royal dictatorships " operating through the medium of the Military High Command, and lack the support of a popular movement.

The German threat to the national independence of the Balkan

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states is strengthening the forces of freedom throughout the Peninsula. Nor are the reigning régimes without dark apprehensions of the portents of the rising German imperial tide. If some readjustment could be made in the Anglo-French import system to liberate those countries from the oppression of German economy, coupled with a definite pledge by Great Britain that violation of the independence of any of the Balkan or Central European states will not be tolerated, this will help to rally all those states round Britain and France in defence of peace and for the arrest of Nazi expansion.

The issue rests entirely with the National Government. At present, Whitehall, more than in any other time in history, can determine whether there is to be peace or war, and whether Germany will be allowed to conquer the Balkans or not. Maintenance of their present policy will assist Hitler to lay the foundations of the " transversal Eurasian axis " on which German expansionist policy is based, gradually opening up the route to the Persian Gulf which, according to many strategical experts, is the key to world domination. Acceptance, on the other hand, of the principles of collective security and a definite guarantee of the independence of Czechoslovakia and of the Balkan States will stem German aggression and save peace. It will further assist the struggling forces of democracy in the Balkans to sweep away the tyrannical régimes, sheltered by Berlin and Rome, which are oppressing the Balkan peoples.

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Labour and Van Zeeland

BY A LEAGUE OBSERVER

DURING THE LAST two years a great deal of hard work has been done —mainly at Geneva, but not entirely—on the problem of how to finance aggressors. Now that the Van Zeeland Report has won the approval of Labour Party headquarters—much to the surprise of people at the League of Nations who had read the Report—it is timely to get down the simple facts of how that milestone on the road to subsidising German and Italian aggression was reached.

The report began by a condemnation of " autarchy " (attempted economic self-sufficiency) as lowering the standard of living in the country practising it, and throwing up barriers in the way of a revival of international trade. From this it went on to condemn the policy of exchange control and import restrictions, or quotas, and expressed its approval of co-operation for the adjustment of the various international prices and currencies, as a step forward to general economic peace, which everyone wanted.

The most striking feature of the draft report was its perfect dithyramb in praise of the Fascist States practising autarchy. " The energy displayed within these countries, the success with which they have increased national activity by supplying work to the numerous mass of their unemployed, are remarkable," it declared. It pronounced quite feasible Hitler's promise of " the creation of a vast industry, destined to produce within the country the greater part of the necessary raw materials, in order to occupy the mass of the workers whom the end of the armaments programme would menace with a return to unemployment."

Not only, in fact, could Fascism supply work by preparing for war, but it could even do without the aid of armaments to absorb the unemployed. Nothing is impossible " when it is a question of energetic and disciplined peoples, very advanced in the sphere of science and technique." And if the Fascist States condescended to resume relations with the rest of the world, it would not be because they were forced to, but because it would be so much " healthier." So that obviously the world must be prepared to pay a price. What price ?

" Countries, such as Germany, which have based their entire economic system on the existence of a close network of quotas and measures of monetary control, would probably be afraid of suppressing those measures . . . . In order to prevent the probably inevitable devaluation

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of their currency causing injury which is always possible—as, for example, a catastrophic decline in its value . . . . it would be probably necessary to provide for adjustments or partial consolidations of debts, perhaps even measures of support during a period of transition."

And so, in return for conferring the inestimable benefit of their co-operation upon a benighted world, Germany and Italy must have their vast "frozen debts" reduced, and a loan to keep up the value of their currency. Not a word, of course, of the Abyssinian and Spanish wars which were aggravating their economic difficulties, or of the gigantic preparations for new wars of aggression which were causing them.

So far, indeed, was the mind of the mover of the report from any such indiscreet thoughts that he went on to propose that Italy and Germany should be among a small group of four or five Powers which should discuss how to improve international economic relations.

"It is evident that any consultation should in the first instance be undertaken by the countries whose participation is absolutely decisive . . . . That is to say that these consultations should be carried on at first by a limited group of Great Powers. . . . . The Economic Committee thinks that the time has come for the Council to suggest to the Great Powers to whom allusion has just been made, and which are already engaged in a joint examination of political problems, to consider" (if they could not enter into such a consultation).

Thus the entire draft report amounted, not merely to a proposal to put a premium on aggression, but simultaneously to a skilful revival for economic purposes of the scheme of a "directory" of Western Powers, who would settle disputed questions among themselves first before passing on the fruits of their labours to the lesser fry. Unfortunately for its author, it was recognised as such at the Committee, and was subjected to sarcastic and corrosive comment. A more discreet document saw the light of day, in which the hymns of praise to Fascist economy, the direct suggestions of financial aid to the autarchic countries, and the proposals as to which Great Powers should take the initiative, had all disappeared.

In October, 1936, the New York correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian* reported (October 22) that "international financial interests are now seeking to work out plans requiring extensive political realignments." His detailed account of these plans sounded curiously familiar to those who had followed the discussion at the Economic Committee six weeks before.

The existing German external debt was to be reduced and refunded. Germany would revalue her currency substantially below the existing level and give up many trade restrictions. She was to be admitted into the Anglo-Franco-American financial accord. Britain and other countries were to open their markets more widely to German manufactures. A large German loan would be floated abroad, primarily to

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purchase raw materials. This economic *bloc* would be supplemented by an openly anti-Soviet political *bloc* : Germany would give assurances against military aggression to France and Great Britain, the Locarno Agreement (Britain-France-Italy-Germany) would be " revitalised," and France under British pressure would give up her pact of mutual assistance with the U.S.S.R.

It will be seen that the New York scheme stated in definite terms what the unsuccessful draft report at Geneva had put more generally. The German and Italian " non-intervention " in Spain was in full swing by now, however, aided by Franco-British " lack of information," and the New York scheme did not meet with too favourable a press.

But in the same month of October the League Assembly had appointed a committee to study the question of " equal commercial access for all nations to certain raw materials." Lack of raw materials was—and still is—one of the chief pretexts for the policy of autarchy, and the opportunity was too good to be missed. The first session of the Raw Materials Committee (March 8-12, 1937) proved this beyond doubt, as the advocates of the Fascist aggressors contrived to make it into an effective platform for tabling their essential demands.

In the absence of German and Italian representatives, their friends had to speak for them. Shudo (Japan) explained that " countries like Japan " were forced to adopt autarchy through lack of raw materials. The remedy was to abolish barriers to world trade (such as quotas), wipe out restrictions on access to raw materials and grant freedom of " immigration of the nationals of all countries and all races into undeveloped territories." Rose (Poland) developed the programme more fully. In order that raw materials should be more fully available to countries which lacked them, it was necessary " to see the problem as a financial one," and make provision for (1) financing the purchasing of raw materials, (ii) organising international credits, (iii) making access to raw materials in undeveloped territories easier. Needless to say, both the Fascist spokesmen omitted to mention the warlike aims for which the raw materials are required by the so-called " have-nots," or the need for any guarantees as to what credits and financial aid would be used for.

Their colleagues on the Committee, however, supplied the deficiency. " If some countries experience difficulties in providing themselves with certain raw materials," said Sir Frederick Leith-Ross (Great Britain). " there is still need to consider whether this is not due to the economic and monetary policy of those countries themselves, and if it is not as a result of excesses in respect of quota restrictions or of an ill-advised financial policy that they have placed themselves in a position of inferiority." Sir Henry Strakosch (South Africa) was less diplomatic : he asked whether it was not the policy of " guns rather than butter " which produced their financial difficulties. M. Stucki (Switzerland)

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also pointed out that there could be no rational solution to financial problems in " that Utopia where guns are preferred to butter." Boris Rosenblum (U.S.S.R.) remarked that the Polish expert had drawn a harrowing picture of poor people (i.e., Poland and Germany) looking wistfully into shop windows packed with goods they could not buy. But when this picture was made to refer to countries too poor to pay trade debts but rich enough to " prepare guns for the launching of a new war," it reminded him of a young man who had no money to pay his tailor, or even for his dinner, but had enough to spend his nights in—shall we say, clubs ? "

Once again the Fascists had drawn a blank at Geneva. But a new star was rising in the horizon. On April 3, 1937, M. Van Zeeland (then Belgian Prime Minister) had been invited by the British and French Governments to undertake an inquiry into the means for " reducing the barriers to international trade." Ten days later Dr. Schacht, governor of the Reichsbank and German Minister of Economy, flew to Brussels, and the very well-informed Brussels correspondent of the *Temps* reported (April 14, 1937) :

> There is no doubt whatsoever that M. Van Zeeland will begin his economic enquiry during his interview with the German Minister of Economy. It is a question, in fact, of learning whether the Reich will pursue its policy of autarchy, or whether it will seize the occasion of revising its policy. Thus will arise the problem of the German currency. The possibility is foreseen here of an alignment of the mark and of the reconstitution, by an international operation, of a sufficient gold fund, which might be earmarked at the Bank for International Settlements at Bâle.

In plain English, an international loan would be floated for the express purpose of supporting the credit of the German Government, in return for which it would join the Anglo-Franco-American currency agreement—and, just as in September, 1936, not a word about German policy. Autarchy would go, but the armaments and the aims of *Mein Kampf* would remain.

The essential thing was to draw the " authoritarian States " into normal economic co-operation with the States enjoying " more or less liberal régimes." To do this " one must not hesitate to ' pay ' for the participation of various countries in the policy of co-operation and economic disarmament : the rich and prosperous States have an interest in supporting a revival in less favoured States." This would be done by general or partial agreements, to which later all States could adhere. And, to supervise the proper fulfilment of the scheme, " the creation of a centre of practical studies and of realisation of economic phenomena (!) would certainly be recommended."

Comparing this scheme with that proposed at the League Economic Committee a year before, we see that the heart of the matter—assistance by the " rich and prosperous states " with " more or less liberal régimes," i.e., Britain, France and the U.S.A., to the less favoured

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" authoritarian States," i.e., Germany, Italy and their satellites—remains the same. So does the method suggested, of private talks from which the U.S.S.R. is specifically excluded, resulting in agreements to which, later, other States would be graciously permitted to accede. The same common lines are discernable in the other trial balloons which had been sent up during the intervening twelve months.

The real and substantial " advance " on the proposals of September 1936, was the suggestion for setting up an entirely new economic organisation for supervising the application of the scheme. This suggestion had originally been put forward in a letter from the Belgian King Leopold to Van Zeeland. Whatever its inspiration, there can be no doubt of its significance—to destroy the importance of the League's economic organisation. And the reason is not far to seek, when we recall what happened in the League's Economic Committee in September, 1936, and in its Raw Materials Committee in March, 1937. There was—and is—too deep a contradiction between the declared purpose of the League of Nations, and of its Covenant, and the various proposals to finance the Fascist aggressors—giving them at the same time a free hand against the U.S.S.R.—for the League machinery to serve the purposes of M. Van Zeeland and those who inspire him.

This was made exceptionally clear at the League Assembly of September-October, 1937. The atmosphere at that Assembly was affected by three factors which were not too favourable to the Fascist States—the Nyon Conference against Italian submarine piracy, which the British and French Governments had been forced in self-defence to convene, for all their tolerance of the Italian war against Republican Spain : the Spanish Government's appeal against the swindle of " non-intervention " : and the Chinese Government's appeal against Japanese aggression. It is no wonder that M. Van Zeeland's report was not published in September after all (the *Temps* message of August 11, quoted above, said it would be). It is not surprising, furthermore, that the discussions at the Raw Materials and Economic Committees were, once again, most unfavourable to the Fascist pleas for financial aid.*

The Raw Materials Committee had before it proposals for granting short-term credits for the purchase of raw materials to " countries practising exchange control," and for encouraging those countries to abandon autarchic measures by facilitating their exports. These proposals had been worked out by a sub-committee of experts, on which Japan, Poland, Portugal and Hungary had had their spokesmen, and were supported by the Bureau of the Committee, which also reported that it was " vital " to discover whether financial support could be granted to countries wishing to abandon exchange control, in order to protect them " against the dangers of an initial deficit in their balance of accounts." The Committee also spent many hours on discussing

*Some account of these discussions was given in the ***Labour Monthly*** for November, 1937.

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the question of the best way to finance the purchase of raw materials, without attempting to discover whether this would not in fact affect only those Powers which were carrying on armed aggression and preparing for more.

This was pointed out fairly sharply by the Soviet expert, supported more feebly by a British representative. The chairman did his utmost to rule such arguments—and amendments based on them—out of order, even threatening to resign "if politics were dragged in." In this he was supported warmly by the Japanese, Polish, Hungarian, Portuguese and Bulgarian experts. However, as a result of further pressure by the Soviet and British representatives, politics were "dragged in." Right at the outset of its report, the Committee admitted the existence of "the question of restricting raw-material supplies in order to discourage aggression": further on, it recognised that movements of capital are hindered by "fears that any capital lent may be employed for non-pacific purposes": it pointed out "the obvious fact that the difficulties now experienced by certain States in paying for raw materials would immediately be alleviated if a political settlement were forthcoming which would permit them to reduce their present armaments expenditure": and it printed, with its general conclusions a declaration by the Soviet delegate saying the same thing in much clearer and more unmistakeable language.

The Economic Committee, in its turn, declared for the abolition or increase of quotas, reductions of customs duties, extension of most-favoured-nation treatment and commercial agreements generally, abolition of exchange control, conclusion of accords for the mutual stabilisation of currencies: the whole programme to be embodied—in broad outline—in a joint Declaration by Governments.

But at every step it hedged this programme around with demands for the most specific guarantees that economic and financial facilities would not be used for warlike ends. It pointedly warned "certain states" that there could be no economic progress if they "introduce into international economic relationships ideological considerations," and if they reject "some kind of *modus vivendi*" between countries with opposing opinions—a direct hint to the German Government.

The Assembly itself clinched the issue by adopting a resolution which:

> Recognising that the political atmosphere of the present time is unfavourable, that international mistrust is widespread, that war is threatening and that actual hostilities have broken out in certain parts of the world;
>
> Being of opinion that in these circumstances the closest co-operation is essential both in the economic and political fields for States which are anxious to maintain peace;
>
> Considering that such co-operation must be based on the renunciation of recourse to violence and war as instruments of policy, and on the strict observation of international obligations

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> Invites all States to follow the guidance of these essential principles of international co-operation, failing which real progress in the economic and financial sphere will prove impossible.

This resolution—adopted at the instance of the British, French and Soviet delegations—emphasised still more clearly the contradiction between a policy based on the League Covenants' conception of the preservation of peace, and a policy aimed at the financing of the aggressors, under cover of a general " economic co-operation " which ignores the stark, staring fact of German, Italian and Japanese aggression.

The contradiction was appreciated most acutely by the friends of the German-Italian-Japanese " axis." In December, 1937, their hopes were running high of a rapid victory for the " axis " in Spain, which would open the way for a friendly understanding between the National Government and the Fascist powers, thereby pushing forward the isolation of France. The withdrawal of Italy from the League on December 11 launched a concerted international campaign, in which German press propaganda, editorials in the *Times*, articles by reactionary French politicians like Flandin, statements by the Polish and Swiss Governments, all played their part, preparing for demand at the League Council in January, 1938, for the elimination of article 16 (i.e., of collective security) from the Covenant. This was the moment for coming out into the open against the League on the issue of financing the aggressors.

On December 15 the *Times* (by now enjoying an established international reputation as the British mouthpiece of the friends of the " axis ") printed an editorial favourably comparing the activities of M. Van Zeeland with those of the League's Economic and Financial Committees. It explained that, faced with the Fascist policy of autarchy, " the only practicable method of advance is not to oppose this development, but, accepting it as an inevitable consequence of post-War conditions, to work out arrangements by which the various national economic units can co-operate to their mutual advantage." This bare-faced advocacy of financing the aggressive plans of the Fascist " axis "—always providing, of course, they would be willing to co-operate with Great Britain—requires no comment.

Two days later, M. Van Zeeland himself arrived in Rome, and the British United Press was able to report that he would propose " an economic conference of Britain, the United States, Germany and Italy, to draft a plan for world economic reconstruction." He apparently felt, stated the agency, that " the League organisation has lost its value." Within the following week both the *Manchester Guardian* (December 22) and the *Financial News* (December 23) were able to confirm this news (France being added to the list of countries to be consulted), and to underline the central features of the forthcoming Van Zeeland Report —financial aid to autarchic States, without any political guarantees, and substitution of a new world economic organisation for the League

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of Nations. Without alluding to these revelations, the *Times* on January 1 1938, published a new editorial arguing that " changed conditions " must be appreciated, that " there is nothing to be gained by railing against economic nationalism," and that there must be co-operation between " national economic units," while leaving each free to pursue its own national interests.

The Report was published at last on January 27, 1938. In its introduction, it once again reports a general willingness to reduce trade barriers, and solemnly argues with the advocates of autarchy as though the lowered standard of living of their people, and not the Fascist actual and projected wars of aggression, were the drawback attached to their policy.

But it also takes up, as immediate steps to " liquidate the past " the very proposals for extending financial aid to the aggressor States —reducing or wiping out their foreign indebtedness, granting them credits, and establishing an international fund to maintain their currencies—which have also been made, again and again, during the period we have reviewed.

In the section of the Report which treats of immediate practical suggestions to ensure success, Van Zeeland mentions in passing, sandwiched in between suggestions made by the Fascists and their apologists, that " many circles " complain of excessive armament, that many " profess " that political anxieties hinder economic reconciliation, and that he " understands the preoccupations " of those who fear that financial aid might be used for warlike ends. Greatly daring, he ventures to add that " guarantees, necessarily of a political order, ought to be given " on this aspect of the question.

But these grudging sentences are obviously the habitual hypocritical tribute that vice pays to virtue. M. Van Zeeland is very far from suggesting that without such guarantees financial aid becomes a bonus for the aggressor. On the contrary. After borrowing once again from the Economic Committee's proposals of September, 1937—the suggested pact of economic co-operation—he proceeds to demonstrate that the substance of such a pact, as he conceives of it, would be the exact opposite of the League's conception.

Great Britain, France, the U.S.A., Germany and Italy are to hold a preliminary conference, and agree on the broad lines of what ought to be done. An independent Bureau will then hold an inquiry, collecting suggestions from other States, and drafting all the " reasonable suggestions " into a Pact. An international conference will then be convened to adopt the Pact. Only when this is over can a beginning be made of working out " the political conditions of a durable peace."

Is it really necessary, after all that has gone before, to demonstrate the infamous character of these proposals ? It would hardly seem so, not only because repetition would become wearisome, but also because their substance found a sympathetic and characteristic response in the

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Fascist States. The very well-informed Berlin correspondent of the *Petit Parisien* reported this from Germany (January 17, 1938). The Rome correspondent of the *Times* reported (January 28, 1938) that, while publicly decrying the Report as being " sponsored by the democratic Powers," there was a strong undercurrent of opinion, both in the commercial and in the official world, which was " far more sympathetic "—because " in the first place they offer the means of obtaining credits," and the wars in Abyssinia and Spain " are slowly sucking Italy's capital dry " : and secondly, because the policy of autarchy had driven up prices, caused great hardships to the people, and raised costs of production.

It would hardly seem necessary, we wrote. Yet it is a fact that the only group in British politics which unreservedly and enthusiastically welcomed the Van Zeeland Report was—the leadership of the British Labour Party. The *Daily Herald* proclaimed it " a good job of work " and a " tolerably good starting-point " for a peaceful and prosperous world (January 28 and March 29, 1938). The Deputy-Leader of the Labour Party in the House of Commons (April 4) and Lord Marley in the House of Lords (April 13) attacked the Government for ignoring and pigeon-holing it.

The Labour leaders have also made the specious suggestion that " if Germany or Italy or other nations refused to co-operate, that was no reason for not going through with the scheme " (Lord Marley, in the House of Lords). Yet one has only to examine such a suggestion to see that it is nonsense. The Van Zeeland Report, with its scheme of finance for Germany and Italy without political conditions, has been put forward precisely because they refused to co-operate with the plans put forward by the League of Nations, which were accompanied by elementary guarantees for world peace. And the *Times*—the mouthpiece of the group which dominates the National Government—has openly endorsed the attitude of Germany and Italy. To speak of going through with the Van Zeeland Report, in these circumstances, is simply to sow illusions—apart altogether from the openly anti-League bias of the Report, which one would have thought sufficient to put the Labour leaders on their guard.

History will one day have to investigate the curious problem of why the British Labour Party leaders, during the period from 1933 onwards in particular, displayed such a positively crazy genius for selecting, in foreign affairs, precisely the causes on which their declarations played straight into the hands of the workers adversaries.

Even as we write comes the report (*Manchester Guardian*, April 16) that the National Government has suggested to the French that the Van Zeeland Report should be adopted as the basis of discussion by a League Committee, set up to consider improvements in the structure and working of the League's economic and financial organisation. Cynicism could hardly go further than this proposal that the work of

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peace for which the League exists should be handed over to a *bloc* consisting partly of its bitterest enemies, with the express object of negotiating arrangements to destroy what positive results the League has achieved in the field of collective security. Such a proposal, however, comes naturally from those who helped the League's enemies in their wars against Abyssinia and Spain. But what have the elected officials of the Labour Party to do in such company?

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India and World Peace

BY V. K. KRISHNA MENON

INDIA HAS EXPRESSED herself in international affairs with wisdom and clarity. Collective security, co-operation with peace powers, opposition to Fascism and the pro-fascist policy of the British Government, resistance by every means to imperialist war, refusal to participate in Britain's wars without her own express consent, an active participation in international peace efforts—these are to-day the guiding principles of Congress policy.

The text of the resolution on Foreign Policy passed at Haripura, given below, amplifies these principles. The adhesion of the Congress to the International Peace Campaign, on the Executive of which she is represented, and the active interest and initiative taken in making a contribution to a progressive policy in regard to Spain, China and Ethiopa, is an attempt in present circumstances to apply this policy in practice.

Congress has in recent months made its views known in appropriate ways to leaders of all sections of British public opinion and more than once communicated the concern of the Indian people to progressive delegations of the Council of the League of Nations.

The Indian Socialist movement, represented by the Congress Socialist Party at its recent conference at Lahore, adopted resolutions on Foreign Policy which reiterated the principles accepted by Congress and these pledge Indian socialist forces to collective security, resistance to imperialist war and support the pooling by the peace powers of their forces for world security.

The Congress Socialist Party have also declared their admiration and support of the National movement in China in its resistance to Japanese fascist aggression and of the Popular Front in Spain. The resolution also declares that the U.S.S.R. is the only major power working for world peace and expresses support of the Soviet Union.

The text of some important resolutions on foreign affairs are given below. They express the Indian view of international affairs.

I. RESOLUTIONS PASSED AT THE 51ST SESSION OF THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS AT VITHALNAGAR—HARIPURA, IN MARCH, 1938.

Foreign Policy and War Danger

In view of the grave danger of widespread and devastating war which overshadows the world, the Congress desires to state afresh the policy of the Indian people with regard to foreign relations and war.

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The people of India desire to live in peace and friendship with their neighbours and with all other countries, and for this purpose wish to remove all causes of conflict between them. Striving for their own freedom and independence as a nation, they wish to respect the freedom of others and to build up their strength on the basis of international co-operation and goodwill. Such co-operation must be founded on a world order, and a free India will gladly associate itself with such an order and stand for disarmament and collective security. But world co-operation is impossible of achievement so long as the roots of international conflict remain and one nation dominates over another and imperialism holds sway. In order therefore to establish world peace on an enduring basis, imperialism and the exploitation of one people by another must end.

During the past few years there has been a rapid and deplorable deterioration in international relations, fascist aggression has increased and an unabashed defiance of international obligations has become the avowed policy of fascist powers. British foreign policy, in spite of its evasions and indecisions, has consistently supported the fascist powers in Germany, Spain and the Far East and must, therefore, largely shoulder the responsibility for the progressive deterioration of the world situation. That policy still seeks an arrangement with Nazi Germany and has developed closer relations with rebel Spain. It is helping in the drift to imperialist world war.

India can be no party to such an imperialist war and will not permit her man-power and resources to be exploited in the interests of British imperialism. Nor can India join any war without the express consent of her people. The Congress, therefore, entirely disapproves of war preparations being made in India and large scale manœuvres and air-raid precautions by which it has been sought to spread an atmosphere of approaching war in India. In the event of an attempt being made to involve India in a war this will be resisted.

China

The Congress has viewed with anxious concern the aggression of a bruta imperialism in China and the horrors and frightfulness that have accompanied it. In the opinion of the Congress this imperialist invasion is fraught with the gravest consequences for the future of world peace and of freedom in Asia. The Congress sends its deepest sympathy to the people of China in their great ordeal and expresses its admiration for the heroic struggle they are conducting to maintain their freedom and integrity. It congratulates them on achieving national unity and co-ordination in the face of danger and assures them of the solidarity of the Indian people with them in the common task of combating imperialism and achieving freedom.

As a mark of India's sympathy with the Chinese people, the Congress calls upon the people of India to refrain from purchasing Japanese goods.

Palestine

The Congress condemns the decision of Great Britain as a Mandatory Power to bring about the partition of Palestine in the teeth of the opposition of the Arabs, and the appointment of a Commission to carry out this project.

The Congress records its emphatic protest against the continuation of the reign of terror which is still being maintained in Palestine to force this policy upon the unwilling Arabs.

The Congress expresses its full sympathy with the Arabs in their struggle for national freedom and their fight against British Imperialism.

The Congress holds that the proper method of solving the problem by which the Jews and the Arabs are faced in Palestine is by amicable settle-

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ment between themselves, and appeals to the Jews not to seek the shelter of the British Mandate and not to allow themselves to be exploited in the interests of British Imperialism.

II. Resolution of the Congress Socialist Party Conference at Lahore Easter, 1938 (*Bombay Chronicle* Summary)

Mr. Ram Mohan Lohia moved and Zaheer Ahmed seconded a resolution on the international situation which was carried by the conference.

It draws attention to the fascist and imperialist attack on socialism and democracy of the industrial countries and on national freedom in Colonial countries. It states that U.S.S.R. is the only major Power working for peace and regards the foreign policy of Great Britain as pro-fascist and as encouraging the forces of reaction and war. The resolution further records the belief that the united struggle of the National Freedom Movements and the world socialist and deomcratic forces alone can meet the fascist and imperialist attack. Warm wishes to the brave defenders of democracy and freedom, in particular to the National government of China and the popular front of Spain are expressed and support to the U.S.S.R. is assured. The resolution supports wholeheartedly the Congress resolution on non-participation in the wars of Great Britain and urges on the Indian people to prepare for the event when they will refuse supplies of men and money to the British Empire and utilise it to achieve independence.

III. Resolutions of the Indian National Congress at Faizpur in December, 1936

World Peace Congress

The Congress having considered the report of Shri V. K. Krishna Menon on the World Peace Congress, records its appreciation of the part he took in this congress as its representative. It supports wholeheartedly the objective of the Peace congress to ensure world peace by removing the causes of war and offers its full co-operation to this urgent and vital task. The National Congress will willingly associate itself with the organisation which the peace congress has established in this behalf. The Congress, however, wishes to emphasise that imperialism itself is a continuing cause of war and its elimination is essential in the interests of peace. The President of the Congress is authorised and directed to take necessary steps in this behalf.

Against Imperialist War

The Congress has drawn repeated attention in the past to the danger of imperialist war and has declared that India can be no party to it. Since the last session of the Congress the crisis has deepened and fascist agression has increased, the fascist powers forming alliances and grouping themselves together for war with the intention of dominating Europe and the world and crushing political and social freedom. The Congress is fully conscious of the necessity of facing this world menace in co-operation with the progressive nations and peoples of the world and especially with those people who are dominated by imperialism and fascism. In the event of such a world war taking place there is a grave danger of Indian man power and resources being utilised for the purposes of British imperialism and it is therefore necessary for the Congress to warn the country again against this and prepare it to resist such exploitation of India and her people. No credits must be voted for such a war and voluntary subscriptions and war loans must not be supported and all other war preparations resisted.

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Spain

The Congress has followed with the deepest sympathy and anxiety the struggle that is going on in Spain between the people of Spain and a military Group aided by foreign mercenary troops and fascist powers in Europe. The Congress realises that this struggle between democratic progress and fascist reaction is of great consequence to the future of the world and will affect the future of imperialism and India. The Congress has noted without surprise that in this struggle the policy of non-intervention followed by the British Government has been such as to hamper in many ways the Spanish Government and people in fighting the fascist rebels and has thus in effect aided the rebels who are being openly backed and helped by the fascist powers.

The Congress on behalf of the people of India sends greetings to the Spanish people and the assurance of their solidarity with them in this great struggle for liberty.

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Mongolia and the Far East War

BY G. D. R. PHILLIPS

[*The first part of this article appeared in the May number of the Labour Monthly. It is concluded in this issue.*]

THE UPHEAVAL OF the Chinese Revolution of 1911 was not utilised by the people of Inner Mongolia as it was by the Outer Mongols; the princes were not able to obtain autonomy from the Chinese, because they were badly divided up by inter-tribal quarrels. Thus, the Inner Mongol masses remained in debt to Chinese merchants and Mongol princes, while their best land continued to be taken by Chinese colonisers for agriculture. With the development of capitalism (foreign and native) in China, however, the position of the Inner Mongol masses became worse and worse, and of recent years they have shown an increasing desire to be free of Chinese imperialist domination. This played into the hands of the Japanese imperialists, who were thus able to spread their propaganda of a "pan-Mongolian Empire," with autonomy under Japanese suzerainty.

The Mongols' hopes in this direction rose to a peak with the establishment of a Mongol "autonomous province," Hsingan, in Manchukuo after the Japanese conquest of Manchuria. They soon found, however, that all was not gold that glittered. They found that all that the Mongols got was a few minor posts, while the Japanese conquerors retained all the key positions for themselves. The Hsingan rebellion, when the leaders of the Mongol "Government" were executed by the Japanese, speeded the process of disillusionment in Inner Mongolia. Thus even at the start of the present Japanese invasion of China, much of the Japanese influence over the Inner Mongols had already gone. The Japanese might have been forewarned by the utter failure of their attempted march into Suiyuan not long before the outbreak of the present war; the Inner Mongols rallied and forced the invaders ignominiously out again. However, when the Japanese advanced along the Peiping-Paotow Railway into Inner Mongolia last autumn, their principal agents, headed by the Mongol Prince Teh, hastened to fall in with the Japanese suggestion for an "autonomous" Inner Mongolian Government at Kweihwa. Already in December, 1937, it was widely reported that an anti-Japanese movement was rapidly spreading among the Inner Mongols. As a *Manchester Guardian* correspondent's informant said at the time, "they fear that Mongolia's part will be

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simply to provide white-collar jobs for Japanese carpet-baggers, and they are not at all happy about it. Indeed, certain Mongol groups are said to be prepared to throw in their lot with Outer Mongolia rather than submit to Japanese exploitation." Shortly afterwards, it was reported that " troops of Outer Mongolia " had seized the town of Peilingmiao, in northern Suiyuan, from the Japanese. This was certainly untrue, and was never repeated—it was an obvious Japanese fabrication. It appears that the truth probably was that Inner Mongol troops had turned against the Japanese and had taken the town from them.

In January of this year, authentic and undeniable accounts were published of the mutiny of two Inner Mongolian regiments south of Taiyuanfu ; they killed their Japanese officers and went over to the Chinese Eighth Route Army. They were quickly reorganised into guerilla detachments and marched against the Japanese invaders whom they had previously been helping. This sort of incident is becoming more and more common.

BURYAT-MONGOLIA

The past of the Buryat-Mongols is by no means as clear as that of the Outer Mongols. Behind high ridges of mountains to south-east, south and south-west, they have been isolated from history, and appear to have taken little part in the conquests of Jenghiz Khan. At the beginning of the 17th Century they met with the Russians, who were marching through Siberia. The Buryats, without firearms, fortresses or capable leaders, were hopelessly defeated in battle ; and the subsequent occasional attempts at freeing themselves were treated by the Russians as " local rebellions " and put down with great severity. Russian culture and new economic forms deeply invaded the life of the Buryats, who were split by a growing number of Buryat merchants, officials and members of free professions. The upper Buryats, acting as stewards for the Russians, kept themselves more and more aloof from the backward population. Through them the Russian administration from the beginning governed the wide mass of the population ; and they were given special powers and marks of distinction. In the last years of the tsarist régime, however, the tsarist government limited this Buryat national " self-government."

The tsarist repression evoked a growth of national consciousness among the Buryats, from whose ranks came many prominent men (Dordji Banzarov, Galsan Gomboev, Khangalov, Agvan Dodjiev, and in more recent years, Bogdanov). A clearly-expressed movement began with the aim of cultural and political self-determination. Appeals by the Buryats for an improvement in their conditions of life received only brutal answers from the Government, or none at all. The civil war brought on the one hand an emigration of Buryats to Khalkha and Bargu, where they organised complete administrative groups ; and on the other hand attempts by the reactionary forces (the White

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armies of Semenov and Ungern, the lay and clerical upper class of the Buryats) to set up a religious monarchy and even a " Great-Mongolian Empire."

In 1920 the Red Army freed the country. The next year was established the Buryat-Mongol Autonomous Region in the R.S.F.S.R. In 1922 the Far Eastern Republic was liquidated, and as a result in July, 1923, Buryatia became an Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, taking in another autonomous region from the Far Eastern Republic. By 1936, 82 per cent. of the peasant economy of Buryatia was collectivised ; 28 Machine and Tractor Stations had been organised with about a thousand tractors ; socialised agriculture accounted for 93 per cent. of the sown area and 92 per cent. of the livestock. There were already Buryat expert tractor-drivers. Prosperity has rapidly increased ; some collective farmers have now seventy head of cattle each as personal property (apart from their holding in the collective farm).

There are now 283 Buryat schools. Before the Revolution there was not one ; the Buryats were forbidden to have national schools or to learn in their own language ; there were only Russian church schools and seminaries in the main urban centres. Now there are Buryat teachers and doctors. There are sixteen regional newspapers in both Buryat and Russian, and in the capital, Ulan-Ude, a daily paper called *Unen* in Buryat.

The economic development of Buryatia has been and is rapid. There are now in operation a powerful chalk-combinat, a mechanised glass factory, a bread-bakery, and a very large meat-freezing combine. Butter and cheese factories are being built. In heavy industry, the largest enterprise is an enormous locomotive and wagon repair-shop in Ulan-Ude, which is just finished. In 1936—when still only half-built—it repaired 300 engines and several thousand wagons. In addition, much work is being done on the gold mines of Barguzin, and the wolfram combinat at Djida—largest in the U.S.S.R. Thousands of Buryats attend higher educational establishments in the principal towns of the U.S.S.R., especially Moscow and Leningrad. I met some of them in the Institute for the Peoples of the North in Leningrad not long ago, and was much impressed by their high culture. Before the Revolution there was not one Buryat engineer or technician and only two doctors and a few dozen Buryat teachers. Now there are scores of fully qualified engineers and hundreds of technicians. General culture is growing, in village as well as town. For example—one out of many—in 1937 collective farmers of Great Kunalei, in the Tarbagatai region, built by voluntary labour a two-storey House of Culture, with " talkies," radio broadcasting studio, stage, class-rooms and meeting-rooms.

The Buryats have no military tradition such as their southern cousins, who once conquered all Asia and half Europe. They were a peaceful,

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domestic nation. When the Russians came, the Buryats had no military leaders and no experience of war, so they were defeated. Yet they could fight, and the heroism of some desperate Buryat warriors is a legend round Baikal, where they threw themselves from a rock into the lake rather than give in to the Russians who had surrounded them. Now, the Buryats have their own military unit, renowned throughout the U.S.S.R. for its horsemanship and marksmanship. Starting existence as a division, it was hardened in battle in the 1929 fighting over the Chinese Eastern Railway. It fought well, and was awarded the Red Banner, while several commanders and soldiers were given Orders. It later became a regiment, and was recently raised to the status of a brigade. I have seen men of this Buryat force, and they present a smart, disciplined appearance in the streets of their native Ulan-Ude.

The Japanese have for many years been trying to obtain influence in Buryatia. And they have sent many spies into the country. For random example, last November a woman collective farmer near the frontier was met by a man who asked her to sell him some clothes. Her suspicions naturally aroused, she took him home, and secretly managed to send her husband for the guards while she prepared some clothes. The police came, and found him, sure enough, to be a spy —and carrying interesting documents. There are many such cases every month ; doubtless a proportion get through.

Up to a few months ago the Buryat-Mongol A.S.S.R. was in three separate parts. The main block was round Lake Baikal, there was a small block (the Aginski aimak) to the east—on the branch of the Trans-Siberian Railway leading to Manchuria—and a still smaller block to the west, near the Cheremkhovo coal-fields. A few months ago the frontiers of the Republic were altered. The shape of the main block was slightly changed, and in place of the two smaller blocks the Buryats in those areas were reorganised into " national regions " in the respective administrative territories in which they lay.

JAPAN'S AIMS

The Japanese imperialists aim at Buryatia, in order to penetrate both Siberia and the Maritime Province. To gain Buryatia they must first gain the Mongolian People's Republic. If they gain the Mongolian People's Republic they can also attack westwards into Sinkiang, or further into Central Asia. They intended first to provoke Outer Mongolia (the M.P.R.) into war, so that they could march straight into its territory from its eastern frontier round lake Buir Nor. But they found : first, the Mongols had a much better army than they expected ; second, that the Mongols refused to be provoked ; and third, that the Soviet Union made it quite plain that if they invaded Outer Mongolia, the U.S.S.R. would come to the help of the Mongols (so that an attack by the Japanese from Buir Nor might find its rear immediately cut off from Manchuli.) So they went more cautiously, into Inner

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Mongolia, going round the Outer Mongol frontier. And they have certainly gone a long way round, though with what strength of tenure is by no means certain. Their aim is to make a strong base of Inner Mongolia. From that base they expect to be able to make a big attack either northwards, into Outer Mongolia, or southwards, into innermost China round Szechwan. Their position *vis-a-vis* Outer Mongolia alone is now better, as they are more out of reach of the Soviet Union's forces. Even so, they would probably not dare to attack Outer Mongolia unless and until the Soviet Union is also attacked in Europe. But there is now appearing the possibility that the Japanese imperialists have been a little too clever in their strategy. For their base in Inner Mongolia may turn into a besieged outpost. The Japanese in Inner Mongolia are fighting hard against pressure by Chinese forces in the south. And meanwhile the population of Inner Mongolia itself, and the local Mongol troops that they have levied and put under Japanese officers, are beginning to turn against the Japanese. Partisan movements are harassing their very long and narrow lines of communication ; it is doubtful if they are able to transport much material along the North-Western railways of which they claim to have full control. Their position is getting difficult as it is. If they had to fight well-equipped forces from the north as well, it might become quite hopeless.

The Strange Case of Major Vernon

Reviewed last month in the Labour Monthly

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Peace and the Colonial Question*

THE COLONIAL QUESTION is to-day at the centre of the world situation and of the drive to war.

Hitler demands colonies as essential for Nazi Germany, and threatens a world explosion if he cannot get them. Mussolini goes to war to conquer Abyssinia, and prepares the further extension of the Italian Empire in Africa. Japan goes to war to annex Manchuria and to extend its domination in China.

The demand of the fascist powers for colonies, for a new division of the world (Goebbels at the Nuremburg Congress on April 17) is the driving force of their aggressive war-making policies.

What should be the attitude of the Peace Movement to this demand of the fascist powers for colonies? It is clear that this question is vital for the whole future of war or peace. Yet there are big divisions in the Peace Movement on this question. It is obviously of extreme importance that these issues should be cleared and a united policy reached for peace.

Inside the Labour and Peace Movements there are tendencies which favour concessions to the fascist powers in the colonial field. They regard the demand of the fascist powers for colonies as "not unreasonable" owing to their relative inferiority in this field, or as economically justified. It is evident that it is only a step from this to regard their aggression as consequently justified. Thus a dangerous opening is here created, owing to confusion on this issue, for fascist propaganda and penetration to make its way into the Labour and Peace Movements. It is therefore vitally important for the issues involved to be cleared.

The arguments of those who favour colonial concessions to the fascist powers cover the following main grounds:

(1) The existing distribution of colonies is regarded as "unjust" since Hitler has none, and the fascist powers in general are the powers which have come off worse in the scramble for colonies. A more "equitable" distribution is in consequence advocated as a step to world harmony and removal of the causes of war.

(2) The Versailles Treaty, which deprived Germany of colonies is recognised as a victor's Treaty of spoliation, which cannot be defended on grounds of justice.

*Text of a Statement submitted by the Communist Party to the National Peace Congress at Bristol on May 28-29.

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(3) The claims of highly industrialised and crowded countries to colonies as outlets for surplus population and sources of raw materials are regarded as economically justified.

(4) Concession to the fascist powers in the colonial field are advocated as a method of appeasing their demands, and therefore making for peace.

It will be noted that the above arguments all treat the colonies as territories or spoils to be allocated among the imperialist powers as their natural rulers, and take no account of the colonial peoples. But it is evident that no democrat has the right to assume the subjection of the colonial peoples without ceasing to be a democrat ; for the Labour and Peace Movements, the wishes of the colonial peoples and their right to determine their own destiny, must come first and by the real governing principle. An attempt is made to meet this difficulty by the proposal, not that colonies should be directly handed over to fascist powers, but that all colonies should be brought under an " International Mandate System " under the League of Nations, and that the fascist powers should enjoy equality with the other imperialist powers the advantages of this method of exploitation.

Two questions here need to be taken separately :

(1) Should the Peace Movement support the handing over of colonial peoples to the fascist powers ?

(2) What should be the policy of the Peace Movement in relation to the colonial peoples ? Would an International Mandate System be a step forward in the interests of the colonial peoples ?

The answer to the first question should be definitely negative.

The Peace Movement should not support the handing over of any colonial peoples to the fascist powers, either directly or indirectly, for joint exploitation through some " international " system.

(1) The Peace Movement cannot support the violent subjection and domination of any people without betraying its own principles. The entire Peace Movement supported the Abyssinian people in their opposition to Italian aggression. But every colonial people is in fact a victim of violent aggression and conquest. To support the colonial system is to become the partners of Imperialism, and to support the rights of warlike aggression and conquest.

(2) There can be no " just " or " harmonious " division of colonies between the imperialist powers. Each successive division corresponds only to relations of forces at a given time. Germany's claim to colonies was not considered until Germany became a military power. Small countries with intense economic difficulties or overcrowding are not considered candidates for colonies, because they are not powers. To follow " justice " here is to follow an illusion. Because the relations of force are constantly changing, each successive division gives rise to a new dissatisfaction.

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(3) The Versailles Treaty was a typical victor imperialist treaty, like the Brest-Litovsk Treaty of German imperialism. But the wrongs of Versailles will not be put right by handing over peoples to the tender mercies of fascist dictatorships, or equipping fascism with new resources for war. Two wrongs do not make a right. On the contrary, this is to prepare the war for a counter-Versailles, as vicious and with similar results. These wrongs can only be liquidated by the democratic and socialist advance of the peoples.

(4) The supposed economic " need " of colonies is not the need of the peoples, but of the big finance-capitalist groups, who require additional populations to exploit and hunger for the super-profits of colonial exploitation. The conquest of Abyssinia has solved not a single economic problem of the Italian people—their hunger, unemployment and misery—but has only brought them added burdens of the most ruinous kind. The solution of the economic problems of the fascist countries, as in all imperialist countries, the ending of private monopoly's exploitation of the people and the organisation of social production for use.

(5) The granting of colonial concessions to the fascist powers would not even be a step of temporary appeasement towards peace, but would, on the contrary, hasten the advance to war. The appetite grows with eating. No sooner had Japan annexed Manchuria, than it advanced into the rest of China. No sooner had Italy annexed Abyssinia than it began the attack on Spain. Each colonial gain would strengthen the war resources of the fascist powers, give them additional raw materials for war, colonial peoples to conscript, and strategic bases. This is not the most important immediate argument why *in the interests of peace the strongest stand is necessary against any concessions to the fascist powers in the colonial field.*

This does not mean that the Peace Movement should uphold or defend British imperialism against the fascist powers. But it would be no solution to the evils of British imperialism to hand over the colonial peoples to fascist domination. On the contrary, the character of fascist domination, as shown in their own countries, as shown by Italy in Abyssinia or Japan in China, or by Nazi colonial doctrine, would mean the destruction of even the limited rights and possibilities of independent organisation that have been precariously won by the colonial peoples within the British Empire.

The policy of the Peace Movement in relation to the colonies should be a positive policy of support and friendship for the colonial peoples, as a powerful factor in the struggle for peace. This brings us to the second question.

The Peace Movement should regard the colonial peoples and their national liberation movements as allies in the struggle for peace.

When the Abyssinian people carried on their heroic fight against Italian aggression, it was evident that they were defending the cause

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of the peoples and of peace all over the world against aggression. So, too, the recent resolution of the Indian National Congress in support of a co-operative world order and collective security.

Every advance of the colonial peoples towards their freedom strengthens the front of the peoples for peace all over the world, and weakens imperialism, the cause of war.

Would the proposal of an International Mandate System represent a step in advance for the colonial peoples ?

In order to answer this question it is necessary to examine the character of the Mandate System.

In the first place it should be clearly understood that the territories at present under Mandate rules were divided up in the old imperialist manner. The German and Turkish colonies were handed over unconditionally to the major allied Powers—who agreed among themselves that they would divide them substantially in accordance with what each had conquered.

These territories were divided among the victorious powers without any consultation with the League at any time.

The Mandates were framed by the powers which had taken over the territories, and this action was later endorsed by the League. The Mandatories thus undertook solemn obligations—to fulfil on behalf of the League.

But these obligations do not give the League any say in the territorial sovereignty of these territories or their disposition. Germany's surrender was outright. The division among the Allies was also outright and intended to be permanent. This was understood by the League. The League merely sanctified the Versailles victors' spoils.

The idea that these territories in some way belong to the League held in trust or held subject to the good behaviour of the Mandate Power has no foundation in fact.

Islands in the Pacific taken over by Japan under Mandate still remain under Japanese rule, although Japan is no longer a member of the League. These islands are fortified—this being against the principles expressed in the clauses of the Covenant covering the Mandates.

We can give many examples of oppression in Mandated territories. The massacre of the Bondelzwarts, a hunting tribe in 1922 by the Government of South Africa ; the slaughter of the Jebol Druses and the bombardment of Damascus by the French Government in 1924. The bombing of the people of Iraq by the British Government in 1924, and the shooting down of religious processions of Samoan people by the New Zealand Government in 1929. There is at the same time denial of democratic rights, no freedom of speech or organisation, rule by ordinance. Exceedingly long hours of labour are enforced, and miserably low wages paid throughout the countries under mandate rule.

There is a permanent Mandates Commission of Powers which do not

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possess mandates. Complaints may be made to this Permanent Commission by the native people of oppression and misrule, but this can only be done through the Mandatory Power. Thus there is very little chance of a complaint ever reaching the Commission, and even so the Permanent Mandates Commission can have no say in the territorial sovereignty of their countries.

Never had the native people been able to obtain any redress for their complaints. Thus the Mandatory System is no improvement on the old imperialist system.

It is sometimes argued that the Mandatory System, despite shortcomings, may provide a stepping stone towards self-government, and the example of Iraq and Syria are cited to prove this. But in fact it was not the Mandate which prepared the way for the Anglo-Iraq and Franco-Syrian Treaties. In each case it was the revolt of the people which made the Mandate unworkable and compelled the alternative arrangement for continuing control which conceded a formal independence.

An alternative proposition is put forward by those who see the weaknesses and shortcomings of the present Mandate System, that is to institute a new system ; to bring all colonies under international control of the League of Nations, vesting complete authority in a new International Mandate System. It is thought that (1) in this way something could be achieved in respect of improving the conditions of the colonial people and removing oppression, while (2) on the other hand, tariff barriers would be removed and industrial capitalist countries would have an equal opportunity to sell their goods, to obtain raw materials and compete freely with one another in colonial markets, thus removing certain alleged existing disabilities.

We believe that this proposition of a single international authority controlling all colonies is in fact illusionary because it fails to take into account the rivalries because of the Imperialist Powers ; but if it were practicable, it would be reactionary in its effects. So far from mitigating imperialist rule over the colonies, it would actually strengthen imperialist control by uniting the strength of all the imperialist powers in relation to each colonial people. It would have the effect of removing further the possibilities of a popular agitation through the parliaments of imperialist democratic countries, and make more difficult the support which could be rendered to the colonial peoples from working-class and other organisations. The second point equally ignores the realities of imperialism or monopoly capitalism. To ask the monopoly capitalist groupings to forego their monopolies and establish freedom of trade is to ask the river to flow upstream. Any attempt at legal or diplomatic agreements of such a character would be in practice circumvented by the working of monopoly capitalism. In the place of proposal of the International Mandate System, which would only arouse the intense opposition of the colonial peoples, the aim of the

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Peace Movement should be to find ways and means to draw closer to the colonial peoples in order to strengthen the common struggle for peace.

The drawing nearer to the Labour and Peace Movements of the national liberation organisations, such as the Indian National Congress, means a strengthening of the whole world peace movement.

The Labour and Peace Movements on their side should equally fight for the extension of democratic rights in the colonies. Whatever the differences of viewpoint on the question of colonial independence, it should be possible for all sections to reach agreement on a minimum Charter of Rights of Colonial Peoples. This Charter of Rights should become one of the principal planks accepted by the Peace Movement, and we should endeavour to ensure that it becomes an integral part of any People's Front programme and of the programme of a People's Front Government.

Such a Charter of Rights would include :

(1) Adult Universal Suffrage.
(2) Compulsory Free Universal Education.
(3) Freedom of speech, press and organisation.
(4) Full rights of Trade Union and Peasant organisation, and a minimum level of labour and social legislation.
(5) Repeal of Pall and Poll Tax Laws and rule by Ordinance or similar extraordinary measures.

If these principles should become acceptable to the wide Peace Movement, then the peoples of the colonial countries could be relied on to give the fullest support to the League of Nations and Collective Security ; to the struggle against Fascist aggression, and in defence of world peace. Such a policy in relation to the colonial peoples would strengthen the peace forces of the world. In the British Empire alone there are 400 million people who, because of the policy of imperialist rule, are not consciously drawn into the system of collective security. Draw these people in on the basis of recognising their rights, Collective Security will not only be strengthened, but power to prevent various parts of the world becoming a prey to predatory powers will equally be strengthened.

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The Philosophy of a Natural Scientist—A Rejoinder

BY CLEMENS DUTT

[*Following the review by Clemens Dutt of Professor Levy's "A Philosophy for a Modern Man" in the April issue of the* LABOUR MONTHLY, *we published a reply by Professor Levy in last month's issue. We publish this month a rejoinder by the reviewer, and will have to close the discussion with this statement.*]

IT IS CLEAR from the character of Professor Levy's reply that he has failed to grasp the nature of the criticism made in my article.

That many leading scientists have come closer in their general outlook to the philosophy of Marxism is an outstanding sign of the present period and a fact of first-rate importance for the development of Marxism in this country. But for that very reason it is all the more important that where differences exist they should be made clear and discussed. This I have tried to do and it should not be in source of offence.

It is undoubtedly true that a few years back Levy was a critic of dialectical materialism, if not a hostile critic. Since then he has changed his attitude to some extent, but he must not complain if the rest of the world refuses to recognise that the philosophy of dialectical materialism has correspondingly altered.

Levy may ignore preceding work in this field, but there have been many eminent thinkers who have contributed to this philosophy and its basic character is independent of anything that he or I could write. To question this and ask for a new "explanation" of dialectical materialism in answer to criticism is to act like those opponents of Marxism who demand triumphantly: "Ah, but what is Marxism?"

In my review, with all due homage to Levy's achievement, I attempt to bring forward certain points which seem to me to characterise the nature of his approach to the viewpoint of dialectical materialism and his difference from it. Eliminating minor criticisms, such as his correction of Marx, some of the chief points are:

(1) That Levy is preoccupied by "isolation," which is not denied by mechanical materialists and does not constitute the essence of dialectics.

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(2) That the central feature of his book is his "General Law of Change," which is a mechanistic scheme and in contrast to the dialectical view of the identity of opposites and development by contradictions.

(3) That the application of his scheme to social changes naturally leads to mechanistic formulæ of change, such as the "drive of technique" acting as the "main causal agency" of all social development.

It is noticeable that in his reply Levy does not attempt to deal in any fundamental way with any of these three points.

Take the central question of the "General Law of Change." In his remarks here, as on other points, Levy talks very freely of misquotation and carelessness, although my account of his law is textual, undistorted and completely relevant. I am not even so careless as to say p. 32 when I mean p. 31. It can only be supposed that for Levy every quotation being an "isolate" is necessarily defective and unfair to use as evidence.

However, the point we are concerned with is the relation of his formula to the outlook of dialectical materialism. Levy is indignant because I have compared his view to that of Dühring of development by opposing forces. I agree that the parallel is not exact. But Levy does declare:

> The quality q is recognised by the fact that its intensification is inimical to the continued existence of the given state S (p. 112).
>
> A statistical isolate involving the co-existence of Q and q prior to the dialectical change is considered as possessing a *contradiction* (p. 113).

It is surely not unfair to regard Levy's exposition of his law as his version of development by contradictions. It is natural to assume that contradiction involves an opposition. Apparently Levy does not like this, perhaps because the terms opposition, conflict imply a struggle, and Levy has laid it down in his previous essay that "inanimate matter does not struggle."

In contrast to the dialectical view, with its logic based on the identity of A and not-A and the interpenetration of opposites, Levy sees only all change taking place by means of two processes, the first of which leads to the second and the second to the transformation of the state or situation S.

It seems perfectly reasonable to say that "if this is all that is meant by dialectical materialism, then its view of development would be a crude and mechanical one." I do not say that Levy declares, I do not even imply that Levy implies—the charge which he so hotly rebuts—that this is all that is meant by dialectical materialism. I merely wish to contrast his Law of Change with the viewpoint of dialectical materialism.

At the same time it is in this connection that he makes his sole reference to dialectical materialism and it is not unlikely that many readers will assume that he is giving an exposition of dialectical materialism.

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This it seems to me is the point which it is most essential to make clear. Just as the Plebs League and such like groups made a speciality of the propagation of a sort of British version of Marxism, so there is a danger of a British approach to dialectical materialism that ignores what has been done by the great international contributors in this field and attempts to purvey a modified version which is supposed to be better suited to British traditions. I do not say that this is the attitude of Professor Levy. But such an approach would bring with it precisely the same danger as that involved by Levy's textbook, viz., the concealment of essential differences under an assumption of treating the same subject in an independent way.

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